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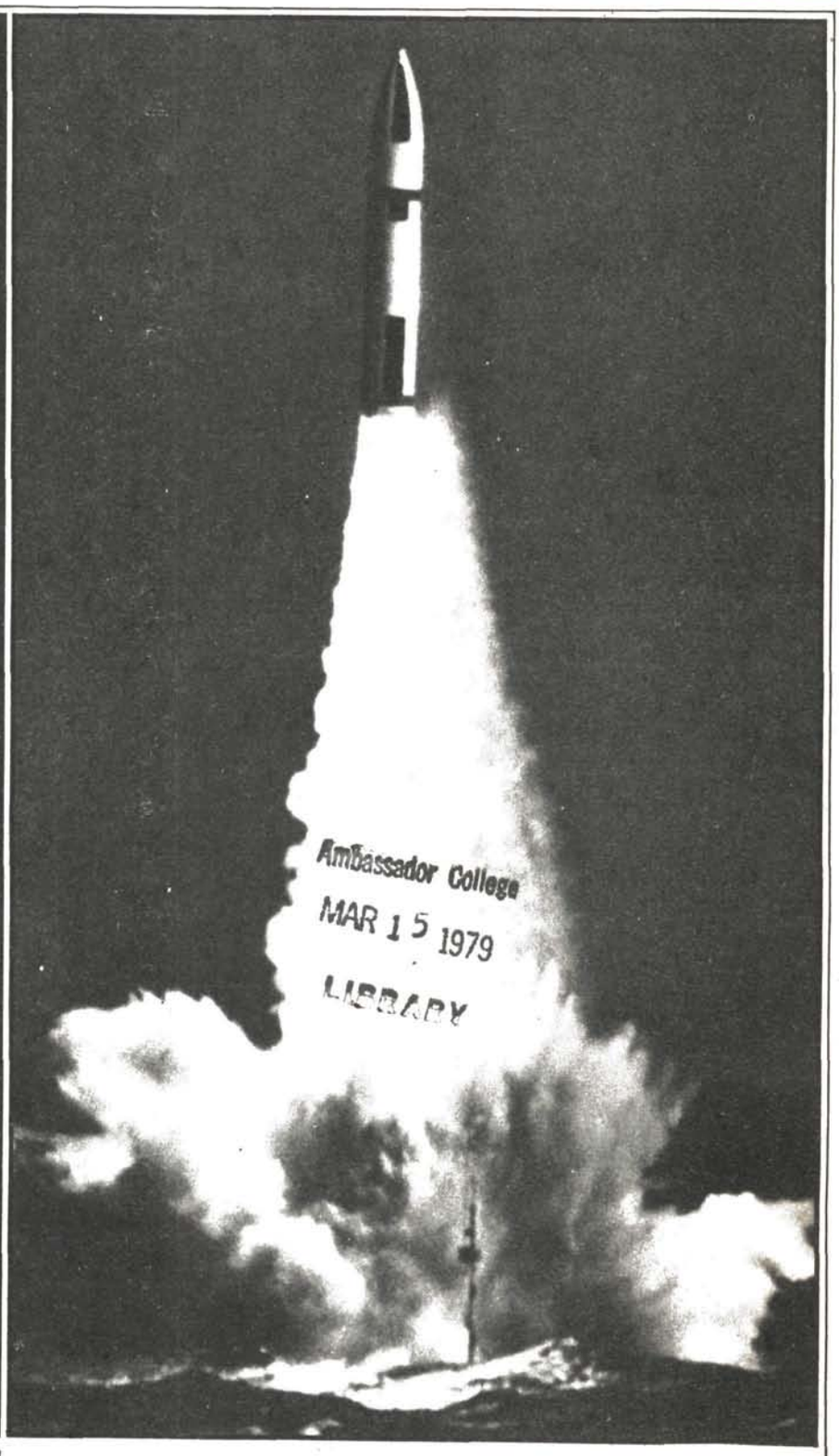
NEW STATESMAN

AND NOW– SON OF POLARIS

Robin Cook on Whitehall's campaign for a nice new bomb



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Genocide unobserved

John Pilger on Eritrea

Mandarins rule, OK? / Cambodia is Sihanouk / Terror in Spain

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WAGES POLICY

Cabinet will fight back over pay

THE TRANSPORT STRIKE is being made the occasion for much heavy breathing about the Cabinet's will to do endless – even ruthless – battle in the name of its 'incomes policy'. The strike itself (see *Moss Evans's laisser-faire*) can be interpreted as a breakdown in the union structure, morally exhausted by numerous efforts to support a 'policy' which in truth is no more than a sequence of expedients. And this is the context in which Mr William Rodgers' complaints about 'lack of leadership' must be placed.

Although much intellectual evasive-action has been taken by Left-wing unionists and Right-wing economists, there is no doubt that union wage-bargaining can stimulate inflation. Contrary to legend, Maynard Keynes was well aware of this, and his reply, in 1944, to a theoretical critic is worth quotation, because it puts the matter in its proper context:

> I do not doubt that a serious problem will arise as to how wages are to be restrained when we have a combination of collective bargaining and full employment. But I am not sure how much light the kind of analytical method you apply can throw on this *essentially political* problem (emphasis added).

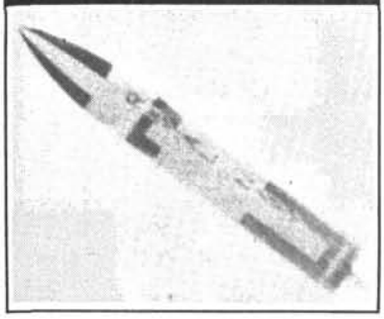
To Keynes' mind, no economic theorising could reconcile free collective bargaining, full employment, and currency stability *in a political vacuum*. Of course, large-scale unemployment can be used – as the Government has done – to make some inroads on inflation. But the mechanism is inefficient, because decisions in unions are influenced far more by employed workers than by unemployed ones: the method resembles that of the old lady who asked the fire to burn the stick, to get the stick to beat the dog, to get the dog to bite the pig . . . to make the pig jump over the stile.

The method of incomes policy promises much greater efficiency. It operates, one might say, much more directly on the pig's motivations. But it is far more demanding in terms of statecraft, because it involves political initiative as well as economic theory. An incomes policy is only workable when the majority of workers – including in this a large section of the salaried middle-class – believe that progress is going to be made towards a fairer and more intelligible system. Given such a perception, people may forego some of the present gains which lie within their power.

Our rulers may say: this is all talk about the long-term, and meanwhile we face an immediate emergency. But to say that is to forget how long the perspective already is, and forget how much credit Labout-in-office has already consumed. For five years now, Labour has proposed that wage-earners should restrain themselves in the cause of progress towards a more equitable and efficient society. There has been ample time for the Government to deliver at least some earnests of a true desire for reconstruction. These have not been forthcoming. The political truth is that the 'incomes policy' is regarded by workers as a device for stabilising the existing condition of society, and that is not something for which anyone – except those already satisfied economically – will sacrifice a present gain.

The Government's true priorities are only too plain. There is no taste for the hard, detailed work of tax reform, which is certainly a precondition of any substantial incomes policy. Rather, credit and energy are expended on transparent charades like the 'sanctions' which (if anyone remembers) were aimed a few weeks ago at Ford's. Nobody can read Callaghan's Britain as a society engaged in the pursuit of equity, or of any coherent approach to economic reward. The economic pattern, as the NEW STATESMAN has repeatedly demonstrated, is a hodge-podge; interest-groups, whether they be truck-drivers or company executives, are accommodated purely according to their capacity to jostle, to exert leverage, or devise subtle means of getting around the rules. We need, and must have, an incomes policy. But it cannot be built upon the politics of expediency.

BRITAIN'S BOMB



THIS WEEK we publish an article by Robin F. Cook MP which argues that our defence establishment – under the guise of 'preserving options' – is preparing Britain's commitment to a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons: our 'independent deterrent'. It is, as he shows, a trick which they have used before. The present Polaris missile-system exists because the first Wilson Government, on assuming office, found itself committed to going on with a programme which it had specifically promised to abandon.

But that system is wearing out. Openly or otherwise, the question must be resolved of whether it is to have a successor. What will Labour's manifesto say this time? And what will be the consequences for human life – for the security of democracy – if the advocates of nuclear demolition triumph once more?

For Conservatives of the Thatcher-Gilmour colour, there is of course no problem. They favour weapons, indiscriminately: ordinary nuclear missiles, neutron bombs, conventional explosives, anything you like. It is a simple, but not very convincing posture. Even orthodox military men wonder whether it has any application to a real world of budgetary constraints and technical choices.

For Labour, and the Left generally, nuclear weapons are merely a special case of the problem of defence: an agonising one, rich in possibilities for division. Yet if we look at the matter in the light of Robin Cook's arguments – and some other arguments which this paper has presented in recent months – it seems as though the Left might present a more coherent defence philosophy than anything the Right is likely to evolve.

There have always been several components in Left-wing thinking about armaments. One is anti-imperialism: not even the most fierce and bloody moderates of the Labour Right are cumbered, generally speaking, with the old Tory lust for weapons as a means to world-straddling power. Another is pacifism – but in its pure case, as a total rejection of the use of violence by communities, it has always been a minority position. Most socialists and radicals share the general human view that there may be circumstances in which violence is justified.

The peculiar energy of anti-nuclear protest – revived, in Europe if not in Britain, by the prospect of the neutron bomb – arose because two other forces allied themselves to pure pacifism. There were first the 'nuclear pacifists', who could not accept the idea of an act of self-defence which must involve the destruction of everything being defended, and who could not believe that a system of deterrence would be anything but inherently unstable. Second, there were the 'selective pacifists', who objected only to Western weaponry. For all the force of its arguments against the system of 'mutual assured destruction' (MAD), this disparate coalition never produced an alternative policy capable of recommending itself to the majority of British citizens, who remain convinced that self-defence is a legitimate national aspiration.

Times change. Faith in the innocence of the Soviet Union no longer forms an important strand in the politics of the Left. But, as Robin Cook shows, another belief has in the same period made its journey to the intellectual boneyard: namely the proposition, once argued with great effect, that it was precisely by *owning* nuclear weapons that Britain could be most effective in procuring their control and gradual abolition. Britain's deterrent is clearly useless, expensive and dangerous. Time has also exposed the fact that it makes no contribution to disarmament.

Where does this leave us? We cannot prevent the super-powers from putting the laws of physics to fiercer and fiecer torture, in the attempt to discover yet further refinements of supposedly 'ultimate' weapons. There is a real sense in which Soviet physics, American physics – and, so long as we remain involved, British physics – is becoming absorbed in a great attempt to re-organise our earthly environment so that nothing can prevail against the will of policy-makers in Washington and Moscow. The fact that such an attempt is almost certainly misconceived does not, unfortunately, make it less dangerous.

The Right in Britain is tied into the attempt – specifically through its advocacy of the neutron bomb, which is a central example of such thinking, and more generally through its espousal of apocalyptic notions of global ideological struggle. The Left is not so hampered, but there is a hard point to be faced. As Mr Cook shows, dispensing with our obsolescent nuclear deterrent does not imply that British expenditure on armaments would be necessarily reduced. The details would depend upon what view we take of our alliances, and of the

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way in which they develop (it took a long while to get into the nuclear trap, and it is going to take a long while to get out). But if the view is taken that British and European liberties may require to be defended – and try to persuade a Slovak Communist or a Czech Social-Democrat of any other view – then the means must be provided to do it. To the extent that an alliance of Western democracies has genuinely defensive aims, not compromised by aggressive and global delusions, non-nuclear means can probably be evolved to serve those aims. But they will not necessarily be cheaper than nuclear systems and may be more expensive: we should always remember that the seductive appeal of nuclear weapons to orthodox military planners is that they appear to offer simple solutions to complicated problems.

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Moss Evans's *laisser faire*

Christopher Hird writes: One of the most remarkable things about the lorry drivers' strike, which goes on following the failure of this week's talks at the conciliation service, is that it happened at all. The road haulage business is an extremely fragmented industry. Over half of the 46,000 professional haulier companies own only one vehicle; a hundred companies own over a hundred vehicles each. These are not ideal conditions in which to organise trade unions. Much of the initiative in this strike has been taken by the rank and file and has been unofficial; the English strike was due to be made official on Thursday. This is the third conspicuous occasion since Mr Moss Evans took charge of the Transport & General Workers' Union that the rank and file have set the pace: Ford and the tanker drivers being the other two. A second thread connects the strike with the Ford dispute: the potentially high cost of strike pay to the T&G.

Until 1977 there were, effectively, very few national negotiations over wages in the road haulage business, because wage levels were set by the Wages Council, on which the union was represented. During this time unofficial, local and regional union loyalities and organisations were established. This is the second year of regional wage negotiations, which replaced the Wages Council system. Scotland is one of the best organised regions and therefore a good one to use as a pace setter. There was a tacit understanding between the union and the management in some other regions that they would settle for whatever Scotland got.

The support for the strike reflects the difference in regional organisation. Overall, possibly only 20,000 of the country's 180,000 drivers are on strike, but a further 30,000 are refusing to cross picket lines. The precise extent of union organisation is not known, but it is 'strong'. Most of the striking workers are concentrated around ports and industrial estates – where access is limited, production concentrated and picketing effective.

Negotiations started in November with a management offer of 5%: the Road Hauliers Association – the owners' trade body – swear blind that their current offer of 15% is the final offer. The figure seems to have been chosen for no good reason other than it is the same as last year and the same as the offer made to the tanker drivers in the oil companies.

According to Department of Employment statistics, at the moment the average pay of a Heavy Goods driver – that's vehicles over 3 tons – is just over £84 a week; for other drivers it is £67.50 a week. This includes overtime and bonus payments but does not include the cash, tax free subsistence allowances, which drivers get under some circumstances. Something like 35% of the average weekly wage is accounted for by overtime and other special payments. Drivers are guaranteed 50 hours pay a week: most of them work it – on average, almost 53 hours each week. About 50,000 drivers hold a HGV1 licence – which gives them the heaviest lorries and the best pay. But, again, this is not astronomical. According to the National Earnings Survey, less than 10% of the manual workers in the road haulage business earn over £5,800 a year; over 35% earn less than £75p.w. Claims from the Road Haulage Association that a lot of men earn over £90 should, therefore, be treated with some caution.

A major problem with the existing wage system is the high proportion accounted for by overtime pay. EEC attempts – so far not very successful – to restrict the number of hours worked, will hit British drivers hard. In addition, road haulage is a very profitable industry. Profit margins on sales are not huge, but the return on capital can be high. Last year's Price Commission report reckoned that in 1977, companies operating food tankers achieved a return on capital of over 30%.

The 1977 annual report of the T&G specifically isolated road haulage as an industry with 'substantial prospects of improved union organisation'. This is one reason why Moss Evans has not intervened to settle the strike. Furthermore he does not have the same public stature as Jack Jones, or the mirage of the Social Contract, to try and get an early settlement. His, and the union's opposition to the current wages policy has also discouraged him from intervening. However, the union's greater willingness to support strikes has started to cost it money. In 1977 the T&G paid out less than £800,000 in strike pay but the Ford strike last year cost it around £2½ million.

The union is at the moment proposing an increase in contributions, but this may not be enough to ensure that income covers expenditure. Though with net assets of £36 million, the union is a long way from bankruptcy.

Uneasy lies the head

Christopher Hitchens writes: It is not every day that the NEW STATESMAN can hope to influence Her Majesty's Government, let alone Her Majesty herself. But, as the headlines above show, the best 'realists' are the 'radicals'. On 10 November we pointed out that her visit was still on and remarked that 'It would be interesting to know which of her advisers now thinks this is a good idea'. We also pointed out that the Shah's policy of 'concessions' would hasten his fall. We ended by asking if there was a chance of the Foreign Office learning anything from experience. Optimism on this score would still be premature.

Set the information free

Patrick Wintour writes: Clement Freud's Official Information bill gets its second reading on 19 January. It has, at the least, the opportunity of seriously embarrassing the Home Office on their reluctance to legislate for open government and,at best, a slim chance of reaching the statute book.

When Freud came top of the ballot for private members bills, knowing that he was likely to lose his seat at the next election, he decided to go out with a bang. Initially he wanted to introduce a bill to decriminalise cannabis but Liberal leaders lobbied for freedom of information on the grounds that it would cause more red faces in government. The Liberals are also closely tied up with the Rowntree-financed Outer Circle Policy Unit which has already produced a model open government bill. Freud has taken up the Outer Circle's work lock stock and barrel. The Bill has the support of many backbench Tories who wish to revise the discredited Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act in line with the recommendations of the Franks Report. It is essentially restricted to central government, leaving untouched the universities, local authorities and nationalised industries. The Left feel there are many other inadequacies but most Labour MPs have come round to supporting the Bill, and not just the part repealing the catch-all Section 2.

Jo Richardson and Jeff Rooker are acting as unofficial Labour whips so the Bill is likely to make it to committee stage after the 19 January vote. On the next Wednesday – 24 January – the Committee of Selection, chaired by Fred Willey, will appoint the committee of between 16 and 24 MPs, who meet for the first time on 31 January. Only then will the sponsors of the Bill be able to see if they have a majority to pass a sittings motion which would allow them to sit something like as frequently as the Benyon abortion bill which met up to 60 hours a week. Even that kind of dedication may not be enough: with a referendum in March and a possible general election soon after, the Bill may have only four weeks in committee before parliament is ended.

The Government will argue that Freud's act would cost too much. The NCCL are soon to publish a pamphlet, putting the cost of a British Freedom of Information Act at between £2.8m. and £4m. annually. NCCL have copied the techniques of the Canadian Bar Association who looked at the US experience with open government and reckoned that the Canadian Government had overestimated their own possible costs by at least $8.9m. If the Bill does reach the report stage, the Government will form an alliance with the Tory Front Bench to kill it. It will be interesting to see Margaret Thatcher's reaction. In 1960 she introduced a private member's bill: the Public Admission to Meetings Act, which gave the public and the press the hitherto withheld right to attend meetings of local authority education committees, the local water boards and the National Health Service. Will Mrs Thatcher be eager to see the principle of public access extended to central government?

Stoking up the energy row

Jeremy Bugler writes: Messengers come this week bearing very cheerful tidings indeed. A report published on Wednesday suggests that Britain can

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SE ASIA
William Shawcross

A fresh chance for the man Kissinger tried to brush aside

Sihanouk: alone, against Hanoi

THE LITTLE PRINCE is back. Weeping, shouting, laughing and giggling, he made his press conference in Peking on Monday into a classic Sihanouk performance. 'You can question me for one, three, five hours', he cried. 'You journalists may get exhausted. But Sihanouk will not be exhausted. I have rested for three years.'

It was indeed for five hours that he talked, with all of his emotions, subtleties, fears and hopes bubbling over and over – almost as he was ten years ago, when he was still managing to keep Cambodia out of America's Indochina war. Just before, that is, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger arrived in the White House and embarked upon the policies which destroyed his country.

Sihanouk's return is an astonishing tribute to his courage, and to the fact that even his enemies – the Khmer Rouge leadership in this case – realise that he is the only man who can represent Cambodia. It is an almost total vindication of those defeated American policymakers who argued that Kissinger was totally unrealistic in trying to brush the prince aside. But on the day that he arrived in Peking to plead his country's case against Vietnam, the Vietnamese captured Phnom Penh, and the Khmer Rouge fled, vowing that they would resume the guerrilla war which they waged in the countryside from 1963 until their own brief victory – when the responsibility of government was thrust on their incapable shoulders by the collapse of Washington's puppets in April 1976.

The Cambodian drama seems to be constantly, terribly re-cycled. In March 1970 Sihanouk arrived in Peking after the government in Phnom Pehn was deposed. Then, as now, he pledged that the fight would continue until 'liberation'. Then, also, his sponsor was China. But the enemy was the US-backed regime of Lon Nol, and Sihanouk's uneasy allies were North Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge. Now, the enemy is Vietnam. And although Sihanouk's press conference paid lip service to the renewed guerrilla struggle, he also suggested that the people of Cambodia would no longer provide very friendly water for the Khmer Rouge fish.

And in March 1970 Cambodia was still a peaceful and workable society. Since then, it has been ruined: it was the desolation imposed by Lon Nol, under Nixon and Kissinger, which brought the Khmer Rouge to power. It was the communists' horrible abuse of power which so reduced the country that the ancient Khmer fear of being swallowed by the Vietnamese now comes close to being realised.

IT MAY BE ONLY Sihanouk who can now offer his people the chance of a decent existence. In Peking, weeping, he declared that he was hated by 'the Lon Nol people' and by 'the Pol Pot people', and that he himself now hated politics. But he has always loved Cambodia, and that motivation, together with his own considerable vanity, may yet procure a restoration against all the odds.

The French installed him as king, aged 19, in 1941. It took him ten years to develop the political sense which enabled him to conduct a remarkable campaign for independence: won in two stages, in 1953 and at Geneva in 1954. Part of that settlement was that the Viet Minh should withdraw from Cambodia, taking all Cambodian communists with them: between 2,000 and 5,000 of them retired to Hanoi, where they remained in isolation until the American-backed invasion of Cambodia in May 1970. But others, perceiving Geneva as a betrayal of their revolutionary cause, remained in the *maquis*, being joined during the Sixties by a trickle of French-educated Marxists like Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and Khieq Samphan. The North Vietnamese, they found, were happy to cooperate with Sihanouk, and offered no assistance to his enemies.

Sihanouk governed Cambodia feudally: head of state, film director, band-leader, roué and statesman. His aim was to avoid Cambodia being swallowed by its powerful Thai and Vietnamese neighbours, and his method was to bend to their will without becoming allied to anyone. Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai appreciated and supported his subtle diplomacy. When the Vietnamese war expanded in 1965 Sihanouk broke relations with America, allowing Hanoi to establish base camps inside his borders. But at the same time he turned a blind eye to America and South Vietnamese reprisal raids into Cambodian territory.

In March 1969 the Nixon-Kissinger regime broke through the ambiguity that Lyndon Johnson had tolerated: they interpreted 'hot pursuit' as a licence to mount a massive aerial attack – 'Operation Menu' – against the communist sanctuaries. Inevitably, the Vietnamese were pushed further into Cambodia, intensifying Sihanouk's domestic political problems.

Sihanouk, asserting his own mystic communion with the peasantry, had made little progress in modernising Cambodian society: internally, his rule depended on being able to placate the generals and the Phnomh Pehn business elite. This he could only do while the Vietnamese and the war were kept at a distance: Operation Menu made the task impossible, and in 1970 his businessman cousin Price Sirik Matak assissted Lon Nol to seize power while Sihanouk visited Moscow and Peking.

HE SAID HE WOULD retire to France (as he did this week), but the Chinese and North Vietnamese persuaded him to ally himself with the straggling Khmer Rouge bands whom his police had been assiduously killing. With the Americans backing Lon Nol, Hanoi began to develop the Khmer Rouge, sending back into Cambodia the cadres stored-up from 1954. Sent back down the Ho Chi Minh trail, they soon clashed with the indigenous *maquis*.

Between 1969 and 1975 Cambodia was for the White House a 'sideshow' linked to the Vietnam campaign, in which Nixon's 'mad-

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treble its wealth over the next half century without any growth in its consumption of energy and electricity. What is more, Gerald Leach's team at the International Institute for Environment and Development argue, using detailed calculations, that this supremely happy position may be reached by known conservation techniques, a moderate guiding hand from government and without any drastic revision in the British life-style or indeed the pattern of industry. We have so much energy in hand from the amount we waste today.

Leach's study, *A Low Energy Strategy for the UK* (IIED and Science Reviews Ltd., £7.50), is possibly the most important work to be done on the national energy problem since the first flurry of studies in 1973/4. After two and a half years' work, funded by the Ford Foundation, Leach and his team may have come to such genuinely radical conclusions because they have little vested interest in a specific outcome and a great deal of intellectual curiosity. Their report will cause great offence. For one thing, they argue that the current official forecasts are vastly over-estimating future energy needs in Britain. By ordinary and prosaic conservation steps, the country need build only a few of the planned future power stations, so saving over £1,000 million a year. Of course, this is very bad news for the Central Electricity Generating Board, and even worse for the nuclear industry. Indeed, the Leach report suggests the government need order no more power stations for the next decade, and then only a couple every ten years. The hugely expensive fast breeder reactor becomes an irrelevance, and with a slight increase in coal use, nuclear power could be abandoned in the UK altogether.

Plainly, the Leach team will win no friends in the electricity generation industry, or among the turbine and power station builders. Nor will the Department of Energy like it. The Leach report argues that the official forecasts are crude, oversimplified and unreliable for their habit of 'aggregating' or lumping together the possible energy needs of different sectors of society. Nor is there any comfort to people (termed 'social optimists') who believe we can avoid an energy crisis by giving up central heating, swopping the car for a bicycle, and starting a crash windmill programme. Leach assumes GDP rises steadily, that houses get warmer, that more people own more cars, dish washers, tumble driers and so on. Indeed, he sees car ownership rising steadily to the point of 'saturation'.

The changes that will be necessary, he says, are a continuing adoption of energy saving in industry, better insulated houses, and the installation of devices like heat-pumps (refrigerators in reverse) that will be in mass production in the 1980s. Better heating and lighting controls, more energy-efficient cars, cooking stoves and washing machines that use less energy to do more: such changes are already underway. Leach simply incorporates them into his model for forecasting. He does not require the government to go berserk, but he does need it to put through a modest programme of reform. It will have to set thermal standards for new houses and offices, by adjusting the building regulations. It will have to get the motor industry to agree to energy performance standards for cars (though the US Government is doing much of the trail-blazing here.) It will have to see that the big consumer durables are made to new energy standards.

Nothing to alarm Parliament. Its very modesty, though, is already upsetting Whitehall. The Department of Energy, despite Benn's reforms, still sees itself as a conduit pipe to deliver more and more energy. It is inextricably intertwined with the energy vested interests, from the Atomic Energy Authority to the oil companies. It views support of our nuclear industry as one of its first responsibilities. So no one should be surprised that the Department is fighting one of Tony Benn's ideas:

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Pol Pot and Sihanouk *Camera Press*

man theory of war' could be practised to the supposed discomfort of communists everywhere, and in which North Vietnamese forces could be tied down. (General Haig used it to promote his own position in the White House.)

Kissinger, profoundly uninterested in Cambodia for itself, consistently refused to regard Sihanouk seriously, or to perceive that the Khmer Rouge were developing independently of Hanoi. There was ample evidence for Sihanouk's support; and in 1972 and 1973 Chou En-lai implored Kissinger to negotiate with him. Kissinger insisted on the self-fulfilling proposition that all power lay with the Khmer Rouge, as agents of Hanoi.

There was no evidence for this view. The CIA station in Phnom Penh sent a stream of 'Agent Reports' and 'Information Reports' to Washington, demonstrating that there were serious conflicts between the Vietnamese and Cambodian communists. The Defence Intelligence Agency did the same. They were utterly ignored.

After the Paris peace agreement, Hanoi tried, at Kissinger's insistence, to make the Khmer Rouge negotiate with Lon Nol by withdrawing arms supplies. It made the Khmer Rouge even more intransigent: they began slaughtering the Hanoi-cadres, and tried to storm Phnom Penh, prevented only by a vast American bombardment.

Throughout 1974 relations between Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge, and between the Khmer Rouge and Hanoi, deteriorated as the Khmer Rouge gained more territory and imposed – to Sihanouk's horror – more and more brutal control over it. He continued, largely through the French, to make private approaches to the Americans. He was ignored until a few hours before the US Embassy was evacuated from Phnom Penh on 12 April, 1975. Kissinger called him in Peking and asked him to return to Cambodia. Rather plainly, it was too late.

SIHANOUK DID NOT believe the first reports of the dreadful evacuation of Phnom Penh. When he realised the truth, he retired to North Korea to avoid media questions. (Supposedly, he wrote a song called *Farewell Cambodia*.) Again, Chou En-lai persuaded him to trust the Khmer Rouge and, on the promise that he would be Head of State for life he returned – in much fear, and with few of his entourage – to his old capital. After Chou's death and the rise of the Gang of Four, Pol Pot stripped him of his honorary post, and until last weekend he was under virtual house arrest.

The horrific regime of 'Democratic Kampuchea' is to be explained partly in terms of the social destruction wrought by the war, partly by the immature character of the Khmer Rouge victors, and partly by traditional paranoia about Vietnamese intentions. As early as April 1975 the US AID team in Phnom Penh reported that Cambodia's society was 'irrevocably destroyed'. The Khmer Rouge numbered only 70,000, most of them young recruits: unlike Vietnam's communists, they had not developed infrastructure, and facing them in the cities were more than three million people, most of them refugees from devastation. The Khmer Rouge leaders have since explained that they saw no way to control the population except by instant dispersal, and government through terror.

Fighting between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese began in May 1975. To Cambodian fury, the Vietnamese continued to occupy the 'sanctuaries' which Sihanouk had allowed them in the Sixties, and each side claimed offshore islands which are thought to have oil deposits. The Cambodians mounted a series of bloody attacks across the frontier (attacking into Thailand at the same time) and disrupted some of the 'New Economic Zones' which Vietnam was organising. Vietnam responded with a limited invasion at the end of 1977: relations between Vietnam and China becoming steadily worse.

LACKING CHINESE AID, Vietnam has become steadily more dependent on the USSR, and mutual fears of 'encirclement' have grown – China with respect to Russia, Vietnam with regard to Cambodia and China. A 'proxy war' thus imposes itself upon traditional enmities. Hoang Tung of the Vietnamese Central Committee said last summer that China's purpose in sustaining Cambodia was 'to provoke a disease which is not fatal to us but keeps us always sick'. At the end of November he said that Vietnam could not prevent the 'boat people' leaving; indeed they had no reason to do so, with the economy in poor shape and living-standards low. Evidently Vietnam now considers that policing a subject Cambodia will cost less than the constant border skirmishing of recent years.

Whether that is correct depends on whether the Cambodians will accept Vietnamese control in return for the ending of Khmer Rouge brutality. And that in turn depends partly on Sihanouk. Arriving in Phnom Penh just before Christmas, the first American journalists to visit 'Democratic Kampuchea' found their requests to see Sihanouk brusquely refused. But when the Vietnamese blitzkrieg began on Christmas Day Pol Pot and his colleagues recognised – like Kissinger, too late – that only the prince could represent Cambodia, and sent him out in a Chinese Boeing to address the world.

Even so, it is hard to believe the Khmer Rouge have a sustainable cause – or even a route for the supply of arms. If, after the horrors of the last eight years, Sihanouk still has the stomach for it, he may well develop a new independent position. Can he force the Vietnamese – with their bogus 'Salvation Front' – to acknowledge what Chou En-lai recognised in the fifties, and what Senator Mike Mansfield proclaimed in the sixties; that 'Sihanouk is Cambodia, Cambodia is Sihanouk, and that is that'?

William Shawcross's book about the Cambodian war, Sideshow, *will be published later this year.*

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that the independent energy researchers, like the Leach team, should get some official funding. 'Why the hell should we support the opposition?' one senior civil servant said about the idea.

Hungarian rehabilitation

Gabriel Ronay writes: A wreath-laying ceremony at the grave of Major-General Lászlo Solyom – one-time Chief-of-Staff of the Hungarian armed forces – in Budapest's Farkasreti cemetery last month, showed the determination of the regimé of János Kádár to prevent the return of Stalinism to Hungary.

Lászlo Solyom was a communist martyr. However, he was not murdered by the Nazis: he was executed on 19 August 1950, during the reign of Matyas Rakosi, Hungary's Stalinist dictator, on the strength of trumped-up charges after a rigged trial. As the newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* stated, 'the Stalinist rulers accused him of treason and spying, a man who was prepared to sacrifice everything, including his life, for his country and the *true* ideals of socialism'.

The quaint graveside ceremony was attended by several Central Committee members of the Communist Party, three Cabinet ministers and the top brass of all the services. It began with the playing of the Hungarian National Anthem, as befitting the memory of a Hungarian patriot. The chief speaker, János Borbándi, Deputy Prime Minister and Central Committee member, paid fulsome tribute to Solyom's dedication to social progress and Hungary's socialist future.

Solyom was formally rehabilitated and the rigged trial verdict declared null and void in the summer of 1956, when the country's intelligentsia demanded – and got – a full exposition of the Stalinist party leadership's appalling crimes. The present Government-organised ceremony, ostensibly marking Solyom's 70th birthday, has been seen as a warning by the Kádár regimé to the surviving Stalinist party *apparatchiks* that the eventual retirement of János Kádár will not mark a return to hard-line communism.

This is not an apology

Bruce Page writes: On 14 December the *Financial Times* published a report about transactions in Thomson shares done on behalf of a number of Times newspapers executives – including the editors of *The Times* and the *Sunday Times*. This was picked up from the NEW STATESMAN which appeared on the same day. (On 13 December the *Financial Times* had requested advance page-proofs of the NS, having learnt independently that the story was forthcoming. The NS frequently supplies advance copies of articles to daily papers in the week of publication.)

The *Financial Times* story somewhat mis-stated the content of the NEW STATESMAN article, principally by saying that the executives had been *given* Thomson shares, whereas the truth was that money had been made available to enable them to make investments in the shares. On 22 December the *Financial Times* – making no consultation with the NS – published a prominent apology to Times Newspapers. This corrected the mistake over the nature of the share transactions, but in such a manner that a reader might have thought that the error was to be found in the NEW STATESMAN. The *Financial Times*, in its apology, went on to suggest that the conduct of all the Times executives had been beyond criticism.

The editor of the *Financial Times* has declined to publish a brief letter from the NEW STATESMAN making clear that this paper should not be associated with his apology. We therefore take this opportunity of saying that we do not withdraw any of the facts and criticisms contained in our original article.

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BUREAUCRACY
John Garrett

The civil service's continuing bias against expertise

Whitehall and the superlaymen

IF YOU WANT to reach the very top of the British civil service, to be a mandarin in a bowl of satsumas, it is, even in 1979, no bad thing to have Eton, Balliol and a first in Classics on your *curriculum vitae*. Moreover, as we shall see when the civil service's training procedures are debated in the House of Commons on 15 January, there are still many people in both Westminster and Whitehall dedicated to the upholding of this fine old British tradition.

The civil service must be unique among large employers in believing that its top administrative jobs are best filled by people with a 'generalist' rather than a technical or professional background, and that the 'most able' of this kind will apply only if they are guaranteed exceptionally rapid promotion in their early years of service. The service is also unusual, nowadays, in defining and selecting the most able in such a way as to produce a cadre of high flyers who have different social backgrounds from the rest of the population of school or university leavers offering themselves for employment.

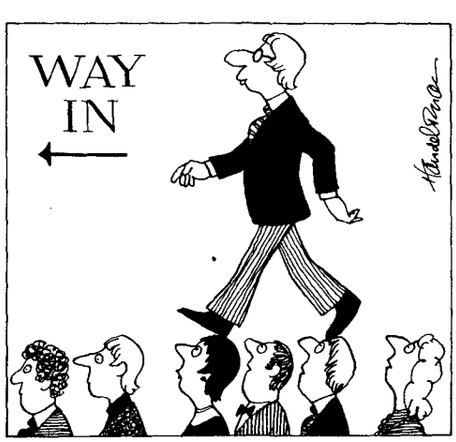
The Fulton Committee of 1966-68 found that the generalist tradition created a top management Administrative Class which was ill-equipped to handle the management, planning and accounting tasks of modern government or to make judgments on the increasingly complex technical issues faced by policy-makers in departments. It was disturbed to find that the Administrative Class was becoming more socially exclusive, with an increasing proportion of its direct entrants coming from the middle class (85 per cent in 1961-65, compared with 64 per cent ten years previously) and a high proportion from public schools (63 per cent) and Oxbridge (73 per cent). 71 per cent had read Arts degrees, mainly in history and classics.

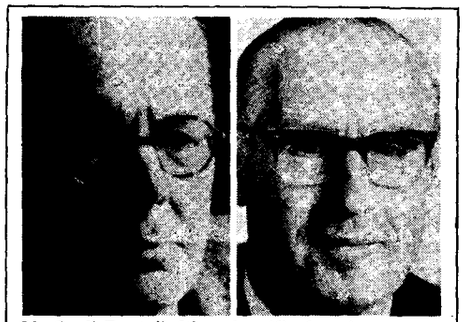
Fulton proposed that the civil service should recruit with a 'preference for relevance': an important qualification for appointment should be that applicants had already graduated in scientific or technical subjects or in social studies. The Wilson government, apparently under pressure from some universities, rejected this outlandish idea that civil servants should actually be qualified in the subjects they were supposed to deal with; in return, a grateful civil service constructed a new and enlarged entry system, the Administrative Trainee Scheme, with the idea of attracting a wider range of applicants. The civil service has put an enormous amount of effort into the scheme, which accounts for 24 per cent of training by the Civil Service College, as against the 6 per cent devoted to training professionally qualified and specialist staff.

The idea was that 250-300 Administration Trainees (ATs) should be taken on each year, of whom at most 175 should be appointed from outside the service and the rest from candidates already in it. The best of them would be 'fast streamed' for rapid promotion. In the event, between 123 and 211 were appointed from outside each year and 19 to 53 from inside (1971-75). Over 85 per cent of the external and about 60 per cent of the internal recruits were placed in the fast stream.

A glance at the figures for 1971-75 shows the nature of these external recruits who were being pushed on so fast. 22 per cent of the applicants but 50 per cent of the appointees were from Oxbridge; 42 per cent of the applicants but 57 per cent of the appointees were Arts graduates; and around 30 per cent of the applicants, but well over 50 per cent of the appointees were from independent schools. Interestingly, even in the case of non-Oxbridge candidates 9 per cent of the applicants but 21 per cent of the appointees were from independent schools. A study by Lord Crowther Hunt showed that these apparent biases were absent from recruitment to the Executive (middle management) grades, where the pattern of appointment by academic subject and by type of school or university was much the same as the pattern of applicants.

THE HOUSE of Commons Expenditure Committee considered recruitment in its report on the civil service in 1977. In his evidence Sir Douglas Allen, then head of the civil service, agreed that there was a bias in the AT scheme 'in the statistical sense'. A possible explanation, 'which most of us would find difficult to accept', was that 'there is a correlation between the talents which the service is looking for and ability to get high incomes, that these talents are inherited and therefore rather more public school people come in because they have inherited some talents and their parents have been wealthy enough to send them to public school.' The Civil Service Commission maintained that it went out of its way to encourage a wide range of applicants and, in examining them, simply proceeded according to a document which described the characteristics required of ATs. This document was, significantly, partly based on the work of Sir Cyril Burt – a fraudulent scientist who needs no introduction to NS readers – and it sets out such qualities as good all round intellect, being able to carry weight in discussion, being able to work with people, having a feeling for ordinary people, having a general interest in current affairs and having drive and determination. Selectors are warned not to choose only administrators, conceptual thinkers and men of ideas: managers, practical men and non-original thinkers are also needed because there are very important managerial posts at the top of the service.





Sir Cyril Burt (left), scientific fraud, and Sir Douglas Allen (right), mandarin: sticking to the old vision of a well-bred élite

From the civil service evidence to the committee it was clear that there was very little understanding that today's huge technical bureaucracies, spending thousands of millions of pounds on scientific, engineering and social programmes might actually be better managed by professionally trained accountants, engineers, scientists and social scientists rather than by all-rounders of indefinable 'character'.

The Expenditure Committee proposed the abolition of the AT scheme and recommended that all recruits should simply be given a job to do after a short induction. On the basis of their performance at work over a number of years, officials from all branches of the service and from all backgrounds should then compete for entry to a management course which would lead to promotion to the higher civil service. The committee returned to Fulton's 'preference for relevance' by suggesting that the entrance arrangements for the course should include examinations in, for example, constitutional law, economics, international affairs, the domestic political process, and management and planning in government. Potential applicants who had not studied these subjects before should be given opportunities by their departments to do so, the committee said.

The Government's cagey reply to the Expenditure Committee said that its observations would be taken into account by an interdepartmental committee carrying out a review of the AT scheme. This committee, of eleven administrators and two outsiders, reported last November.* It acknowledged some faults in the AT scheme (though, despite all the evidence, it rejected charges of bias in selection) but the main reason why it thinks the scheme needs changing is the dramatic change in graduate entry to the service. The Executive Officer entry point, formerly for A Level school leavers, is now increasingly used by graduates, who comprised 48 per cent of this entry in 1977 compared with 4 per cent in 1964. Between 1,500 and 2,000 graduates now come in at this point every year, 70 per cent of them with first and second class degrees. They, and another 1,500 specialist graduates, go into ordinary supervisory or technical jobs while the ATs, often with similar degrees, are still selected separately for the royal road to the top. The Executive grades,

* *Report of the Administration Trainee Review Committee*, Civil Service Department.

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not surprisingly, take a dim view of this extraordinary arrangement.

The AT Review Committee had the problem of offering a better deal to the Executive entrants while retaining the hallowed principle of a cadre of AT types who would continue to be given exceptional promotion. The AT type is still seen as a candidate with a high level of 'all round ability' rather than the possessor of a degree in a specified subject, and the Review Committee argues that he has to be offered fast promotion because he would not want to join the service if he had to go to the trouble of competing with other graduates.

The proposal is that 200-300 Executive Officers would go, after between one and five years of service, into a two-year development scheme. Some 30-60 of them would then be selected for a fast stream where they would be joined by a similar number of ATs who had served only a two-year probation after recruitment. Training for this fast stream would be by job experience both inside and outside the service and by short courses. A few specialists might be expected to join the scheme at various points.

The proposed arrangements are an improvement in that they emphasise performance on the job as a basis for selection and the training arrangements stress experience rather than formal training at the Civil Service College. They also give a better chance to unfortunate young graduates who don't have the social characteristics of ATs, though half the fast stream is still reserved for the AT type. Having the right background will still almost certainly give a young administrator a lead of several years over the other entrants, which will be an enormous advantage when he gets nearer to the top.

The greatest weakness of the proposed scheme is that it is still intended only for generalists. It is a device to perpetuate the deep conviction of the civil service that the gifted layman (whether Executive or AT entry, though preferably the latter) is the right person to occupy the top policy-making posts in the civil service and that technically qualified specialists, who will very rarely get into any fast stream, are best kept in an advisory position. The research team on which I worked for Fulton came to the conclusion that the civil service had become so single-minded in pursuit of this conviction that it actually discriminated *against* expertise. Fulton's proposal – still far from realisation – was to create a unified service, amalgamating over 1,000 career classes, so that the professional could compete fairly with the generalist for the top jobs. It also proposed that there should be more late entry into the service for people with useful experience outside it (the results of this proposal are predictable: 46 mature Principal entrants in 1968; 7 in 1976).

A modern civil service needs all the talent it can find. It particularly needs a top decision and policy-making layer in which there are a high proportion of people with a background in science and technology, quantified analysis and research, or who have experience outside the service, or who have prepared themselves before entry to the highest ranks by study of the problems of modern Britain. A degree in classics or history, the right social background and the vague 'superlayman' qualities prescribed by Sir Cyril Burt are no longer good enough for the people who take so many decisions that affect our national life.

LAW

Should the courts gag the Commons?

THE PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE of the House of Commons is currently engaged in an abstruse but important exercise – a review of its *sub judice* rule. It was instructed to do so by the Commons after the naming of Colonel Johnstone on the floor of the House last May.

The *sub judice* rule is the parliamentary counterpart of the contempt laws which control press reporting of cases while they are before the courts – but it is applied very much more strictly. Because words spoken in the House of Commons are protected by absolute privilege, the House has always operated a self-denying ordinance under which it makes no comment whatsoever on criminal cases once charges have been laid, nor on civil ones once a hearing date has been set. The aim – in theory – is to maintain an absolute separation between Parliament and the courts.

In 1979 this theory no longer corresponds to reality. Under Denning, the Court of Appeal increasingly sees its role as dynamic rather than static, pushing its interpretation of the law to the point where it assumes the function of a legislative body. The National Union of Journalists are the latest victims of these legislator-judges (over blacking PA copy in the *Daily Express*). In recent years Labour ministers have often been on the receiving end of their controversial decisions – Peter Shore over Freddie Laker's air routes, Fred Mulley over the 11-plus in Tameside. Meanwhile, the legislative function of the House of Commons has become less and less important. Instead, the Commons operates as a public debating chamber in which the Government is forced to account for the way it runs the country. The leader of the Opposition relies on it for putting questions to the Prime Minister, backbenchers use it to put pressure on ministers and the media depend upon it for a flow of news and comment on the great issues of the day.

THESE GREAT ISSUES, however, have an increasing tendency also to become cases before the courts: Laker, Tameside, censorship (of the Crossman diaries), Grunwick and the security service's role in initiating the ABC trial. Such cases are brought either by the Government itself or by politically motivated creations like the National Association for Freedom. Yet Parliament's literal interpretation of the *sub judice* rule prohibits awkward questions to Government and silences debate, even when a case takes years before the appeal processes are over. And since newspapers have been pushing back the boundaries of contempt over the past decade, their columns remain free to comment while Parliament is gagged. It is a situation which favours the Right and erodes the spirit of democracy.

The *sub judice* rule was relaxed a little in 1972, when the National Industrial Relations Court threatened to bring all economic activity within its legal embrace. Now the NIRC is no more, the elderly, establishment Committee of Privileges may well try to tighten things up again.

It has already exonerated the Director of Public Prosecutions of a breach of privilege in his attempt to stop newspapers publishing Parliamentary reports of Colonel Johnstone's name. In the end Hetherington took no action, but the fact that he was later seen congratulating himself in the *Observer* for his 'aquittal' by the Committee suggests he might have another go – and if he finds a more timid and complacent press, the Committee of Privileges will have paved the way for the censorship of Parliament.

The Committee has also recommended that it should no longer be necessary to petition the House of Commons for permission to quote Hansard in court. This is a formality usually granted, but if the recommendation goes through, judges will be free to pore over the myriad ministerial *obiter dicta* in Hansard unimpeded.

THESE TWO PROPOSALS are not crucial in themselves, but if the Committee adds to them a recommendation that the *sub judice* rule should not be relaxed, they could represent a further erosion of Parliament's effectiveness. The House should have the same freedom as the press to comment on issues of public interest, whether or not they are before the courts.

It is not yet clear whether the House will get a chance to debate the proposals, with sitting days in such short supply and an election imminent. If it does, it will probably endorse them. Many barrister MPs feel rather greater loyalty to their bewigged daytime vocation than to their moonlighting activities at Westminster, and there is a deep reverence for the whole paraphernalia of the courts among members of the Labour Right – who see themselves as champions of order against the fecklessness of the Left. Some of them are now in danger of preferring the cosy isolation of our legal system to the proper functioning of a democratic parliament.

Christopher Price

Councils seek to curb demonstrations

THREE BILLS NOW BEFORE the House of Commons seek to outlaw processions in Merseyside, Cheshire and the West Midlands, unless seven days' notice is given to the police. (A 'procession' can be any group of people moving in the same direction with a common purpose and with an 'organiser'.) If passed, the Bills will limit severely the freedom of trade unions and other political groups which depend, in certain circumstances, on spontaneous action. They also appear to contravene established public policy. Lord Scarman, in his report after the Red Lion Square inquiry, refused to recommend any change in the present law, which allows processions without prior notice to the police. And Merlyn Rees made it clear in the House of Commons on 27 February last year that he saw no point in modifying the law.

What is most disturbing is the way these new measures are being introduced. The three Bills are a by-product of the recent reorganisation of local government, when local authorities were ordered to introduce new legislation to consolidate their existing bye-laws. Merseyside, Cheshire and West Midlands have been among the first to do so. Merseyside's Bill provides, in addition, power to 'regulate the conduct of meetings . . . and processions'. The consolidating laws were not intended to change the *status quo*. Classed as 'Private Bills', they originate in the House of Lords and would normally be expected to go through the Commons on the nod.

INTERESTED PARTIES can, however, oppose them at that stage by depositing a petition with the Private Bill Office within ten days of their first reading in the Commons. The TUC has alerted unions and trades councils and a campaign is building up, but, curiously enough, it has not yet presented a petition of its own – although one from the TUC would almost certainly ensure removal of the offending clauses.

Next Monday is the deadline for petitioning against these three Bills. Four more are now before the Lords, from South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, Isle of Wight and Greater Manchester. Each one except Tyne and Wear contains a similar provision for seven days' notice and will have to be fought individually.

Anna Coote

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Genocide unobserved

LAST JULY JOHN PILGER visited Eritrea and described in the NEW STATESMAN the gruesome, heroic struggle of its people. Then, the Eritreans had control of every major town except Asmara, the capital, but there has since been a tragic reversal in their fortunes. In the West, however, little has changed: there is almost complete diplomatic indifference to Eritrea's fate. Unable to get back into the country, John Pilger pieced together this report from letters and eyewitness accounts.

FOR THE past fifty three days, since dawn on 18 November, an attack of World War Two proportions has been mounted against an impoverished, sick and mostly civilian population; and virtually nothing has been said about it by a British politician and only the barest reports have appeared in the British Press.

It began with a frontal assault by six brigades supported by heavy artillery and round-the-clock aerial bombing and strafing, and it has since encapsulated many of the 'sophisticated' anti-personnel (i.e. anti-people) modes of warfare developed since 1945 and especially in Vietnam: Napalm B, which sticks to human skin and fries to the bone, often over a period of weeks; cluster bombs, whose myriad needles 'swim' through human flesh and organs and are difficult to detect even under X-ray and often cause slow death; defoliant poisons, such as 2, 4, 5-T, which destroy vegetation, 'deaden' the earth and sow the seeds of human mutations for generations; and more.

There is now overwhelming evidence, from eyewitnesses and diplomatic reports, that serving officers of the Soviet Union planned and led the attack, using the latest Soviet armour and weaponry, and that Soviet pilots are dropping the Napalm, the clusters and the poisons on a peasant people in their own land. And hardly a word have we heard. Mrs Smith of Gloucestershire has won the pools, ITV has won the Christmas ratings 'battle', Olivia Newton John has got her OBE and the Shah of Iran continues to get his come-uppance; but hardly a word about the atrocity of Eritrea.

Last year I reported from Eritrea in the *Daily Mirror* and later described the uniqueness of the Eritreans' struggle and revolution in the NEW STATESMAN. The response from readers was immediate: many people wrote to ask why Britain, which had played such a decisive role in Eritrea's recent history, had done *nothing* officially to speed humanitarian aid to a people fighting to prevent, quite literally, their extinction. Others, including a doctor, set out for Eritrea to do what they could; others sent money, most of it, typically, from those who could least afford it. Under Parliamentary pressure, the Ministry of Overseas Development, which dispenses official British charity to the poorest, sent a derisory £150,000, equal to less than a quarter of Mrs Smith's pools win, to the International Red Cross to assist those in need in the Horn of Africa 'including Eritrea'.

Since then only a handful of Western journalists have taken the last route open, through the Sudanese desert, and have witnessed the Eritreans' pain and heroism: notably Jon Snow of ITN and Dan Connell of Reuter. The reports of both these journalists have been tinged with a certain incredulity – how could such events have been ignored in civilised quarters for so long? Jon Snow's reports of the beginnings of famine and its use as a weapon against the Eritreans, and of the desperate need for medicines – any medicines – led him, on his return, to make a passionate one-man appeal which drew fatuous criticism of his lack of 'detachment'. Connell's tenacious pursuit of evidence of direct Russian involvement merited the front pages, if any story ever did, and instead was relegated to the bottom of an inside page of one of the Sundays.

Why? Why is this international atrocity, which is an atrocity of such magnitude that it equals many Biafras, of no apparent concern to anybody? Eritrea's darkest hour in the eighteenth year of its war against 'absorption', (which means genocide), says much about the game of nations as it is currently played: a game in which small nations are pawns, to be moved at will, to be declared 'important', depending on their resources and the opportunities for exploitation, or to be declared expendable. At one end of the board is a country like Iran which has oil and is therefore 'important'; at the other end is Eritrea which has nothing, except people, and is therefore 'unimportant'. We in the media have dutifully followed these rules of play; Iran, before the 1973 oil embargo made it important, was the place where thousands died in an earthquake on a slow news day.

This might fairly be called the Kissinger legacy. He articulated the game, promoted it and crystallised it in his infamous dismissal of Bangladesh as a basket case of no strategic value – i.e. expendable. Only Vietnam, a small nation with a long history of resisting foreign vandals, confounded his Theory of Expendability, and the Vietnamese paid dearly for their defiance. Eritrea, unfortunately, is no Vietnam. It has less than four million people and a land of mostly thorn bush and sand that has represented, to successive Ethiopian regimes, merely a route to the Red Sea: a tract of necessary earth populated by unnecessary people who, for seventeen years, have refused to be starved and bombed out of the way. The Russians, drawing on their long experience of dealing with small nations, are now seeing to the task.

ERITREA'S 'MISTAKE' is to be allied with no one, to go it completely alone, to grow its own socialism, to have no political debts. This stems, at least partially, from a sense of betrayal that is like a presence when you discuss it with them. They are neither 'secessionists' nor 'rebels'; these are fraudulent terms used as propaganda by the Ethiopians and adopted by much of the foreign media. The Eritreans have an historic, a legal and a moral right to nationhood, as Britain should know. In 1952 Britain, which had administered Eritrea after driving out the Italians, supported a UN decision that Eritrea would be 'constituted as an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia'.

When, in 1962, Haile Selassie attacked and annexed Eritrea, abolished its parliament, bombed its towns and villages, banned its languages and murdered thousands of its partisans, the Western powers did nothing; Ethiopia, with its American communications bases, was then firmly in the Western 'camp'. When the Emperor was overthrown by a gang of army officers with wondrous claims to being 'Marxist' revolutionaries, the war against Eritrea was intensified, and the Ethiopians' new nannies, the Russians and Cubans, arrived by the thousand; for Moscow the tangible prize is the deep water naval base at the Eritrean port of Masawa. Had the Russians, who once trumpeted the Eritreans' cause, stayed away, the Eritreans would now have recovered almost all their homeland.

But no; and so here – delayed – is the news from Eritrea. Some of it has come in letters from despairing Eritrean friends, including an unforgettable young man called Simon Haile, one of sixteen trained doctors attempting to care for a nation half the size of London, where epidemics are as frequent as sandstorms. Two Russian generals have directed the offensive from a command bunker in the Eritrean capital of Asmara. In the west, the Eritrean Liberation Front, the ELF, has been decimated. In the east, the larger Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front, the EPLF, whose 'fighters' are probably the most disciplined guerrillas in the world, has fallen back from the second largest town of Keren, around which forty villages have been bombed and finished off by T-64 tanks. Dan Connell reported from outside Keren last month:

> 'Russians piloted the MIG aircraft, fired the guns and drove some of the tanks which were carefully co-ordinated for the first time against the lightly armed guerrillas. In contrast to earlier human wave attacks by Ethiopia's ill-trained, largely peasant militia, the Eritreans had to cope with complicated tactical manoeuvres on multiple fronts, preceded by intensive pinpoint bombing and shelling . . .'

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The following may help the reader understand, in human terms, what this means: A third of the population are refugees in their own land. Almost all of them suffer from malaria and dysentry, and one child in three has tuberculosis or trachoma or severe malnutrition, or all three. Indeed this is a nation of children, where large families are assiduously encouraged so that fourteen-year-olds can go to the front; and many of those who survive are employed making artificial limbs. Last month, in Simon Haile's hospital, in underground tunnels that spit dirt under each bombing raid, stocks of blood, antiseptics, bandages, even first aid kits, ran out completely; and this is perhaps the only hospital, as we might understand the word, in all of Eritrea. Amputations proceed through the night. 'The lucky few', wrote Dr. Haile,

> are given anaesthetic. But for most there is only surgical spirit and a mouth gag. This is terrible for the younger boys . . . but there is nothing we can do. We have nothing'.

Driblets of aid have reached them, much of it politically selective. Last June, a Foreign Office spokesman said that Britain could not extend humanitarian aid directly to Eritrea because Eritrea did not qualify as a 'recognised state'. In a letter of 20 October to Mary Dines, general secretary of War on Want, a Ministry of Overseas Development official wrote that the Disaster Emergency Committee's 'terms of reference' recognised the Eritrean Red Cross and Red Crescent as recipients of its aid – £75,000! – but that it did not recognise the Eritrean Relief Association 'or similar organisation'. This is interesting, because both the Eritrean Red Cross and Red Crescent operate in former ELF areas now occupied by the Ethiopians and the Eritrean Relief Association, which is run by the EPLF, remains the *only* Eritrean relief channel through which aid can go directly and efficiently to the war zones and to most of the refugees. A letter of 19 December from Ted Rowland, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to Lord Avebury reaffirmed that all British aid must go through 'recognised governments and international organisations'.

A British Embassy official in Khartoum once described the EPLF to me as 'the lefties'. Can this be a clue to the reason why the EPLF's relief organisation is not acceptable as the recipient of Britain's pennies? Around the time the Foreign Office was making its stand on aid to Eritrea, Dr John Yudkin, lecturer at the London Hospital Medical School, was giving documented evidence to a seminar organised by Voluntary Service Overseas. Dr Yudkin's researches show that Britain exports £200 million worth of drugs to impoverished countries, for profit, and that many of them are unnecessary, dangerous and banned in Britain – compared with £25 million in direct health aid programmes. Put this beside the Labour Government's hard-won position as the fourth largest supplier of arms to the Third World, mostly to dictatorships – last year it was almost a billion pounds' worth of missiles, 'anti-personnel' weapons etc. And put these two items of relevant information against a brave and suffering people's need for first-aid kits, bandages and basic life-saving drugs which our Health Service dispenses like Smarties and you will understand, perhaps a little more clearly, the Theory of Expendability.

John Pilger is a special writer on the Daily Mirror.

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Buy a new H-bomb – the easy way

Knowingly or not, the Government will have to make a commitment soon on whether Britain is to remain a nuclear power. ROBIN COOK reports:

ANY HISTORIAN who set out to establish a canon of the great schisms of the Labour movement would make an early entry for the controversy over unilateral nuclear disarmament at the turn of the fifties. It provided an historic conflict which brought many of my generation, myself included, into political activism for the first time.

Few now remember how successful we were or that the subsequent manifesto of 1964 was explicitly hostile to the concept of Polaris as an independent British deterrent:

> It will not be independent and it will not be British and it will not deter . . . We are not prepared any longer to waste the country's resources on endless duplication of stragetic nuclear weapons. We shall propose the renegotiation of the Nassau agreement.

We forget because the Wilson government did nothing of the kind. To be fair, Polaris had already acquired a momentum which made it difficult to halt and the Navy had thoughtfully laid down two of the hulls in the months which preceded polling day. However, the original plan had provided for a fleet of five submarines in order to ensure that two were on patrol most of the time. As the economic clouds gathered in 1965 the order for a fifth submarine was cancelled. It was a characteristic compromise of the Wilson era, lacking any logic. Britain remained in the nuclear league, but with a deterrent that was scarcely credible.

Since then at least one boat has been on station at all times. Each submarine undertakes in turn an operational patrol of eight weeks throughout which it remains submerged and observes complete radio silence. The weird isolation of its mission is emphasised by the form which is completed by every crew member, stating whether he wishes to be informed of a family disaster immediately, forty-eight hours before landing, or upon disembarking.

For a decade these patrols have provided Britain's sole capability for strategic nuclear strike, but we have finally arrived at the point when we must take a decision on whether we are going to renew the present system. The reason why can be succinctly demonstrated. Each Polaris submarine was designed for an operating life of twenty years and the accumulated background radiation from the reactor which powers the boat prevents that lifetime from being stretched with safety by more than an additional five years or so. The first submarine (*Resolution*) was launched in 1966 and must therefore leave service around 1990. This will effectively terminate the system as a credible deterrent, since it will no longer be possible even to pretend that one boat is always on station.

Some enthusiasts have suggested that the active life of the submarines could be prolonged if instead of roaming the ocean they merely crept up some of the sea lochs on the West Coast – or maybe even the Thames – and thus reduced stress on the hull. Such geriatric exercise would unfortunately also sharply reduce the area in which the Soviet killer submarines would need to hunt their ageing quarry. In any case the system is dependent on the Polaris missiles for which all parts are purchased from the Americans, who will have phased out their own Polaris fleet by 1985, upon which point the Lockheed production line will close. This will be critical since the solid fuel propellant is part of these supplies and has a limited shelf life (probably less than five years). The Polaris system cannot be prolonged much beyond 1990.

Camera Press

Kennedy and Macmillan at Nassau

It, typically, takes ten years from the decision to order a new deterrent system to its actual deployment. If then we wish to retain a nuclear deterrent beyond 1990 we must reach a decision by 1980: in other words, we now confront the same decision which faced Macmillan when he went to Nassau in 1962. There is though one major difference – Labour is not in opposition but in power, with at least a sporting chance of staying there, and can this time determine what happens.

ADMITTEDLY THIS ASSUMES that Government ministers will be allowed to take part in the decision, and it may be salutary to recall what happened under Attlee – which was the last time a Labour government was called upon to take a nuclear initiative. Margaret Gowing in her exhaustive history of how Britain first acquired the bomb[1] has revealingly demonstrated that elected ministers were invited to give their approval to the programme only *after* it was well advanced.

At the end of 1945 Lord Portal was appointed controller of production for the project. In spring 1946 it was resolved to construct an atomic pile to provide the essential plutonium, and in the summer, authorisation was given for a plant to enrich uranium. In the autumn of that year the Air Ministry issued the operational requirements for the heavy bomber it would require to carry atomic warheads. Only in December did Portal submit a memorandum to Attlee (without the knowledge of the Minister of Supply, to whom Portal was theoretically answerable) requesting Attlee to authorise the preparations for an atomic weapon. And even then the Prime Minister was offered the option of making no decision but leaving Portal to continue on his own initiative.

1 Britain and Atomic Energy: Independence and Deterrence 1945-52. Macmillan.

In the event approval for the programme was given by six cabinet ministers in an ad-hoc meeting to which they were invited by Attlee – who apparently took care to exclude both Dalton and Cripps, the two key economic ministers, who might have been expected to jib at the cost. The extent to which the military regarded the outcome of this meeting as a foregone conclusion is nowhere revealed more sharply than in the decision of the Chief of Air Staff to submit to the Ministry of Supply a requisition for an atomic bomb *five months before* the politicians met to give their consent.

There are already suggestive indications that the military are now attempting the same tactics. For instance, they have persuaded the present government to spend some £450 millions on a 'Polaris improvement programme' – sub-titled Project Antelope (a sobriquet presumably devised to assist us in learning to love nuclear deterrence by importing an air of grace and elegance to the art of incinerating cities). This programme has included four test explosions and at least one test launching of a missile. Little else is known about the programme but it is believed that its objective is to improve the ability of the warheads to penetrate Soviet defences, probably by replacing the present three warheads of 200 kilotons with six smaller warheads of 40 kilotons. It appears that the Ministry of Defence expects such research to accelerate rather than diminish: only last spring Aldermaston ordered a £6 million Cray-1 computer from America. This is a huge, though relatively unsophisticated 'number-cruncher' used particularly to solve problems of warhead design. Intriguingly ICL were not invited to bid as they could not meet the tight timetable which called for delivery this year.

Perhaps the most revealing project has been the commitment 'of several million pounds' to construct an additional plant at Chapelcross power station in Dumfries, to provide an indigenous source of tritium. The essential fusion reaction of the British thermonuclear warhead appears to be between tritium and deuterium – both heavy isotopes of hydrogen. The new plant is not expected to come on stream until the Eighties and it is improbable that this substantial investment is being made for the sake of the present, obsolescent, nuclear force.

The danger is that the politicians will not be asked whether they wish to proceed to a new generation of nuclear weapons until such projects have already created a momentum that makes it difficult to avoid their logical outcome. Thus projects which were originally justified as preserving an option may eventually pre-empt the decision on whether we really want that option. It is always difficult to decide to go back down an escalator which is moving upwards.

BEFORE THAT STAGE is reached it is important that the Labour movement should debate whether it really wants its Government to be even nominally responsible for ordering

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another nuclear deterrent. We can begin by burying one argument in favour of a British deterrent which the years have exposed as totally hollow. Last time round pride of place was always given to the contention that disarmament was more likely to be achieved through a process of multilateral negotiation. Such negotiations have been going on more or less incessantly ever since and have miserably failed either to disarm a single warhead or even to prevent a fearsome growth in the arsenals of the superpowers. Moreover our own nuclear capability has become so irrelevant to the balance between them that they have excluded Britain from SALT, the one remaining forum at which serious discussion of nuclear disarmament still takes place, and in so doing have provided the final bitter comment on the multilateralist paradox – that we must first build a bomb of our own in order to play a constructive part in banning it.

No advocates of a British deterrent are now going to maintain that it may assist disarmament. The problem about arguing with them is that they are now quite unclear why they still want the thing at all. The official expression of our nuclear strategy is confined to a single paragraph which has appeared without significant change in the annual Defence White Paper throughout this decade:

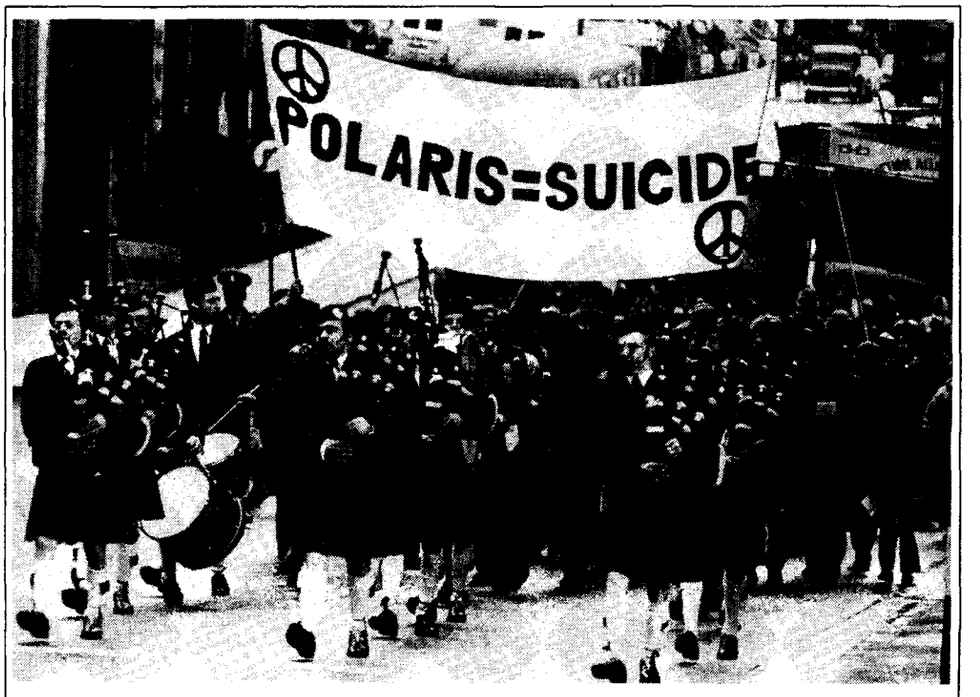
> The United Kingdom's Polaris submarines, HMS *Renown*, *Repulse*, *Resolution* and *Revenge*, between them maintain a continuous patrol and constitute an integral part of NATO's strategic nuclear force. (Cmnd 7099.)

I know of no one – not even former Secretaries of State for Defence – who believes that the function of our Polaris submarines is to provide 'an integral part of NATO's strategic nuclear force'. The reason for disbelief is not difficult to find. The total complement of our Polaris fleet is capable of threatening 64 separate targets. This compares with the 5,120 targets which can be attacked by the submarine-launched missiles of the US – never mind the much larger number which can be reached by the strategic bombers and ICBM's which they also maintain. Were the Polaris force eliminated its effect on NATO's strategic forces would barely be noticed. It would indeed be bizarre for Britain to devote substantial procurement expenditure to renewing this negligible (and shrinking) proportion of the overall force. Few even of Britain's allies take this rationalisation seriously. The US Department of Defense in its annual reports has for some years listed the British Polaris fleet, if at all, not under NATO's strategic forces, but under 'theater nuclear programs'.

LACK OF CLARITY in official thinking is not unusual in British policy and would be less important if there was any vigorous exposition from unofficial sources of why we require nuclear weapons. However there is virtually no current literature on the topic and most verbal expressions of support for a British deterrent which I have encountered recently have been notable for their opaque character – 'you must have something which will cause a chap to reflect'.

The reason why proponents of Polaris are unable to be more candid is that their private beliefs are in flat contradiction to the official rationale. They would justify our deterrent not as making a contribution to the NATO force but as offering us *independence* of the alliance.

This begs the question whether our Polaris fleet really constitutes an independent capability. As we have noted, all the missiles and their spare parts are supplied by the US, as are parts of the warhead. More significantly, the British missiles are normally targeted through the Omaha headquarters of US Strategic Command, which also controls the US Polaris fleet.



The Polaris 'commitment' overrode election promises: will its successor do the same?

However, the issue of whether Polaris provides an independent *technical* capability is less important than whether we can imagine a situation in which Britain might realistically exercise that capability. It is inconceivable that a British government would choose to respond to a conventional attack on Britain (or a conventional attack on West Germany) by means of a nuclear exchange with the USSR. Here we confront the classic dilemma of a medium nuclear power in conflict with a super-power. Whether or not the Polaris fleet provides an independent capability, the one or two boats which might be expected to be on station at any time clearly do not provide more than a one-shot capability. Thus use of our nuclear force would sacrifice the capacity to deter retaliation.

The same dilemma would arise even after a limited nuclear strike against Britain. If Britain were to respond in kind it would again risk being left without a deterrent against yet more devastating strikes. Thus, the only circumstances in which the Cabinet would be likely to authorise the independent use of British strategic nuclear weapons would be after an attack which had so pulverised Britain as to leave little point in worrying about further retaliation. As these are the only circumstances in which it is credible that our independent deterrent would be used, they are also the only threat which it independently deters.

This naturally leads us to ask whether such a threat is not be deterred equally effectively by our alliance with the US. Here we discover a curious feature of the case for an independent deterrent. Ultimately it turns not so much on fear of the Soviets, as on suspicion of the Americans. Thus, it is contended, we cannot rely on the Americans to escalate to a nuclear exchange, which would place their home population at risk merely to save Europe from invasion. We must retain a European nuclear capability, however small, which will enable us to escalate unilaterally and thus 'trigger' the larger arsenal of our ally.

There are powerful reasons for doubting whether any American President would deliberately put New York at risk to save Düsseldorf. However if the Europeans are left wondering whether the US would honour its nuclear guarantees, by the same token the Soviets must also remain in the dark as to whether the superpowers would be able to manage the crisis which would follow any war in Europe without escalating willy-nilly to nuclear exchange. If the function of nuclear strategy is to raise uncertainty in the Soviet mind as to the consequences of a conventional attack, then that role is fulfilled by the Atlantic alliance.

Nor is that uncertainty significantly enhanced by an independent British capability. If the US is not prepared to risk nuclear exchange for West Germany, it is even less plausible that Britain might. Moreover if the Americans will not escalate to defend the 300,000 troops and several thousand warheads which they deploy in Europe, it is difficult to imagine they would follow suit if we released the British 'trigger'. It is not surprising that advocates of a British force frequently fall back on the line that it at least serves to keep the Soviets guessing – by which they presumably mean that since we have no clear idea of why we maintain an independent deterrent, the Russkies must be equally baffled.

TRADITIONAL STRATEGIC ANALYSIS focusses on ability to deter attack. We should consider more often whether it does not also *invite* nuclear attack.

The current European world view is characteristically egocentric. Indeed, it is fashionable to regard dispute over Central Europe as being the only casus belli which could provoke a serious possibility of global nuclear war. Superpower detente is assumed to be sufficiently strong to contain all other friction. The evidence to support this confidence is

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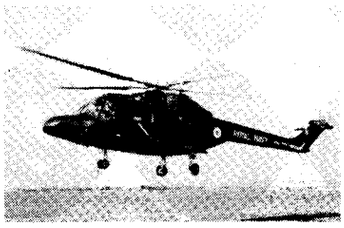
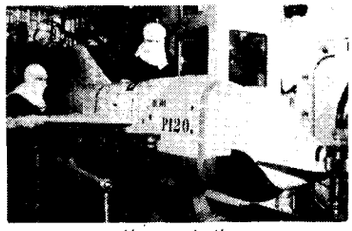
Continued devotion to nuclear deterrence has been accompanied by a steady degradation of Britain's conventional military capacity – which, on Robin Cook's argument, (below) is more likely to be useful in inhibiting Soviet designs against European borders. In 1977 the Defence sub-committee of the Select Committee on Expenditure expressed concern in a report entitled The Cumulative Effect of Cuts in Defence Expenditure, and listed numerous 'holes' in the non-nuclear defence system, which seems less and less likely to be filled if the commitment is made to a complex and costly successor for the Polaris submarine fleet and their thermonuclear missiles:

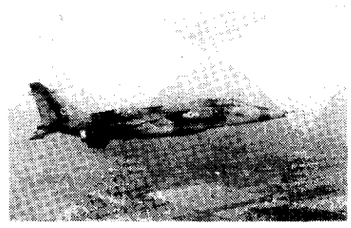
ARMY
Cancellations include the RS80 long-range artillery project, the Vixen wheeled-reconnaissance vehicle... various radar and communications items... and Chieftain tank modifications.
Reductions include the numbers of Gazelle and Lynx helicopters to be acquired, follow-on orders for tracked combat-reconnaissance vehicles... and further radar and communications items.
Deferments include the replacement for the Hawkswing anti-tank missile (such as either the Hot or Tow helicopter-borne guided weapons)... provision of crew-portable general spares for the MILAN infantry anti-tank weapons, together with other successors to present equipment.

NAVY
Cancellations include replacements for the amphibious-force commando ships and the improvement programme for the Ikara anti-submarine missile.
Reductions include destroyers, frigates, conventional submarines, mine-countermeasures vessels and naval fuel (restricting training time available for crews).
Deferments include the Sea Skua missiles and general spares items.

RAF
Cancellations include the QC 434 short-range air-to-air missile project and various radar and communications items.
Reductions include the Jaguar strike/attack aircraft, the air transport force, communications aircraft and engineering spares.
Deferments include the medium-lift helicopters for the support of the Army (cancelled in the 1974 Defence Review, reinstated in the 1977-78 programme, but subsequently deferred) reduction by up to one-third of the delivery rate of the Tornado multi-role combat aircraft (MRCA) and a variety of radar and communications equipments.


Lynx helicopter


Ikara missile


Jaguar strike aircraft

Milan missile

meagre. On the contrary the growing accuracy of delivery vehicles and the rapidity with which they can be activated by modern control systems, now provide compelling motivation for firing first, before the other side launches its own pre-emptive strike. This raises awesome doubts as to whether the superpowers could successfully manage *any* future international crisis without being impelled towards war by the nature of their technology. We certainly cannot discount the possibility that the superpowers could find themselves engaged in a nuclear exchange not preceded by conventional conflict – in Europe or anywhere else.

In such a disaster the role of Polaris as 'an integral part of NATO's strategic nuclear force' would inevitably entrammel Britain. Indeed mainland Britain provides a number of targets related to our strategic deterrent which no prudent Russian commander would ignore – the Faslane base for our submarines, the Rugby Very Low Frequency communication station, which conveys the firing signals, and Fylingdales early-warning station. Ironically the retention of an 'independent' nuclear capability only serves to ensure that we are embroiled in *any* conflict between the Americans and the Soviet Union. Other NATO countries, such as Norway, have reflected on such liabilities and have then resolved not to acquire nuclear weapons nor permit them to be deployed on their territory.

IT IS HARD to offer any specific estimate of the cost of a future nuclear deterrent but we can at least predict that it will be more than last time. First, it must be doubted whether a fleet of only four submarines could offer a credible deterrent to the end of the century. Advances in anti-submarine warfare suggest that a minimum of two boats must be permanently on station. Any fleet aiming to maintain two boats on patrol would require a minimum of five submarines.

Secondly, the Nassau agreement provided for supply of the Polaris missiles at a highly advantageous price that reflected US appreciation of the difficulty in which Britain was placed by Kennedy's decision to cancel Skybolt. Indeed the actual cost of purchase of the missiles turned out to be 40 per cent *below* the original British estimate.

It is a matter for speculation whether an American administration would be prepared to supply such sensitive technology once again – or whether it might be precluded by a future SALT treaty from doing so. We can, however, be reasonably sure that we would not get the substantial discount which we received on Polaris. If we do not obtain our missiles from the US we will be obliged to establish a ballistic missile industry in Britain which may well represent the greatest resource cost associated with the procurement programme. Given our scarcity of investment capital and skilled manpower (which has imposed familiar constraints on economic growth) it must be doubted whether the creation of an industry for such limited purposes with no export potential should be a priority.

A brave attempt to identify the procurement costs of a new deterrent is contained in a paper by Ian Smart[2] from the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Smart concludes that a fleet of five submarines and associated missiles would cost £2,500m to £3,250m at 1977 prices. These figures approximate to the cost of the Concorde programme.

It is of course not certain that the successor system would use ballistic missiles and nuclear-powered submarines. But it is doubtful whether a credible system could be got more cheaply. 'Cruise' missiles, which are the current fad, do not offer any savings: many more are required to compensate for their greater vulnerability. Smart actually concludes that cruise missiles would impose higher procurement costs and substantially higher running costs. (Indeed, the main force behind the cruise missile lobby is that old totem of the Right – the European idea. The more acute of the unreconstructed Eurofanatics have grasped that a cruise missile system would provide the basis of a Euro-deterrent to which all the major states are technically well-qualified to make a contribution. Even the Italians could be roped in.)

Whatever the procurement costs, they would necessarily be spread over a number of years, probably averaging out around 10 per cent of the annual procurement costs in the defence budget. Any reader with experience of budget management will be aware how difficult it is to find such a deceptively small proportion out of a finite budget. Most of the cuts in local-authority expenditure of recent years have turned on smaller adjustments, but have entailed appalling consequences for our social services.

The acquisition of a successor to Polaris would evidently imply a profound retrenchment in conventional procurement. Would it be rational to further cut our expenditure on conventional defence in order to release resources – not for industrial investment or public services, but for a nuclear deterrent? When the question is posed in those terms few even among the military would vote for another Polaris.

If the real purpose of our armed forces is to deter a conventional Soviet attack on Europe, then this is more likely to be fulfilled by maintaining our conventional defences, than by degrading them in order to invest in a dubious nuclear deterrent. In any case the missions – such as Ulster – which we have actually demanded of our forces throughout the three decades of NATO, have rarely had anything to do with east-west confrontation, and still less with the strategic nuclear balance. The Royal Navy's own promotional brochure lists nine 'instances of the use of British naval forces' during the lifetime of Polaris. In none of them can the Polaris fleet have been of the slightest relevance, and some, such as the 'Cod War', suggest other priorities for Naval procurement.

The pressure to choose between competing forms of military expenditure would of course be less acute if the defence budget were increased by an amount which compensated for the cost of a successor to Polaris. But would a Labour government be prepared to divert resources from other parts of the public

[2] *Future of the British Nuclear Deterrent: Technical, Economic and Strategic Issues, 1977*

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sector to cater for the nuclear bomb?

This military dilemma is not one peculiar to Britain, imposed by a conspiracy on the part of the Tribune Group. France, for instance, has created her strategic nuclear force only by paring her conventional forces, culminating in the withdrawal of 10,000 troops from the central front in Germany. (To mount their Kolwezi operation the French were obliged to borrow their parachutes from the Zaire army.)

The most remarkable feature to emerge from the defence review of 1974 was that Britain, by now one of the poorer members of the alliance, was the only member making a contribution to every theatre of NATO operations, at every level of force. We still provide the alliance with its second largest navy, its third largest land army on the central front, its only reinforcement capability for the northern flank – and one of only two strategic nuclear deterrents formally committed to NATO. The time has finally arrived when we must choose which of these roles we intend to liquidate. The nuclear deterrent is the most obvious candidate.

THE DECISION to order the Polaris fleet provoked vigorous opposition, at least partly because it was believed that a commitment by Britain to abandon nuclear weapons might exercise a powerful moral lever on the superpowers to negotiate in good faith towards disarmament. We shall never know whether this belief was well-founded. Nor need we now expect any decision we may take to drop out of the arms race to have the slightest effect on the two front-runners. However, such a decision by Britain could yet influence the disturbing number of nations which are crowding behind us in the race.

We are approaching the point at which possession of nuclear weapons may be accepted as a legitimate attribute of any state aspiring to medium-power status. Iran, Brazil, India, South Africa and Israel have all contemplated the development of nuclear weapons. The proliferation of nuclear capability represents a profound threat to world peace, not least because we do not know how either superpower would respond to a nuclear strike against one of their client states.

The nearest the international community has approached to success in containing the spread of nuclear weapons is the negotiation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But since 1970 the NPT has been subjected to severe strain, not least because of Article VI committing the nuclear powers:

> To pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Understandably the non-nuclear states take the view that there is scant evidence of any nuclear power fulfilling its obligations. Their resentment was repeatedly articulated at the quinquennial review conference in 1975 and a number of countries made it plain that they are not prepared to support the NPT regime if it is to be merely a means of preventing them acquiring nuclear weapons while those with nuclear weapons continue to expand their armouries.

The replacement of Polaris could no doubt be justified within the strict letter of Article VI, but certainly not with its spirit. Moreover the decision on whether or not to replace Polaris will presumably have to be taken in embarrassing proximity to the 1980 review conference. A decision to abandon our nuclear deterrent could yet play a part in containing proliferation, by demonstrating that at least one middle ranking power does not regard the possession of nuclear weapons as essential or even desirable.

IT WOULD BE particularly fitting if Britain were to make the first break with nuclear logic. The thermonuclear warhead is the ultimate extension of a process, made possible by air power, which has transferred the brunt of warfare from armed combatants to the civilian population. No-one did more to pioneer this process than British Bomber Command. Throughout the last three years of the war it maintained a strategic offensive against German cities which was explicitly calculated not to wreck military targets nor handicap industrial production but to demolish civilian morale. The advent of the atomic bomb provided a novel weapon which was qualitively distinct, but it did not in fact result in any immediate change in the quantitive impact of the strategy. Indeed the bombing of Dresden with 'conventional' incendiaries by the Anglo-American air force killed more people than at Hiroshima or Nagasaki a few months later. Ironically the totalitarian powers were in practice more restrained than the democratic states in their application of air power against civilian centres. Both Germany and the Soviet Union confined the bulk of their bombing capability to tactical ground support.

The moral evil of a debased warfare, in which the focus of military attention is shifted from the forces of the enemy to his home population is not relieved by the fact that the enemy appears to have done the same. After all, we do not keep an RAF squadron ready to flatten the largest pub in Crossmaglen on the grounds that it might deter the IRA from bombing public houses anywhere else.

And the moral enormity of our nuclear strategy has an added bitterness in that the Polaris submarines are explicitly designed to extract posthumous revenge from what is in effect a hostage population. There is nothing in the extensive literature of the Judaeo-Christian code which could be read, even perversely, as providing ethical authority for such an act.

The last Labour manifesto proclaimed.: 'We have renounced any intention of moving towards a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons.' The pledge was largely a cheat, as the authors knew the question would not arise in the life of the current Parliament. It will certainly arise in the life of the next. Now is the time to make sure that the manifesto for that Parliament is no less explicit. ●

Based on a submission by Robin Cook and Dan Smith to the Defence and External Affairs subcommittee of the Commons Select Committee on Expenditure.

CORPORATE TAXES

Another victory for the oil multinationals

Godfrey Hodgson writes from Washington: A few weeks ago British and American negotiators initialled a draft tax treaty between their two countries which according to the *New York Times,* 'will save American multinational companies hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes, largely at the expense of the British taxpayer.' The *Times* went on to quote an expert on the staff of Congress's Joint committee on taxation as saying that the draft treaty, (which remains to be ratified by both the US Senate and Parliament), 'definitely benefits the private sector, both British and American' and 'definitely results in a revenue loss to the British.'

A spokesman for the United States Treasury added that the new treaty added up to 'a terrific deal for the United States. It means a big infusion of money into the United States from the UK.'

He was not exaggerating. The most important change contemplated in the new treaty is a change in the eligibility for a rebate of advanced corporation tax. British tax law eliminates double taxation on dividends paid to British investors in British companies. Because the company has already paid corporation tax, the shareholder is given a rebate of the corresponding proportion of the income tax due on his dividend. This rebate, however, is not at present paid to foreign investors. There has been consideration for some time of giving the rebate to portfolio investors – that is, to foreigners buying shares in British companies for investment purposes, defined as those holding less than 10 per cent of the company involved. But in the treaty a new concession would be made to *direct* investors – those, that is, who hold more than 10 per cent of British companies. They would be given a rebate of fifty per cent of the corporation tax paid.

The sums involved are considerable.

The treaty would make the concessions retroactive: the British Treasury would have to make a net retroactive payment of almost £200 million just to clean the slate. And from now on, Britain would be obliged to kick back some £45 million a year to US investors – mainly, of course, to big US-owned multinational corporations.

Some tax experts here, surprisingly, maintain nevertheless that the United States 'got taken to the cleaners'. The argument they make is that when Britain went over to a new tax system five years ago, in order to bring our system in line with European practice, the rate of corporation tax was deliberately raised as a bargaining counter. 'They were copying the French in being beastly to the Americans,' one expert told me. By not providing relief from double taxation for US investors in the first place, Britain was deliberately penalising them. If that is the case, all one can say is that those US investors who put their trust in the British Treasury have been rewarded for their faith and patience.

According to the *New York Times*, the new tax treaty reflected a long and determined lobbying effort by both British and American business, including several of the US oil companies that are benefiting most from the North Sea. The high point of this effort, apparently, came at a White House luncheon last summer attended by the President and twenty major contributors to democratic party funds. Dr Armand Hammer, chairman of Occidental Petroleum, which shares one of the richest North Sea fields with Getty and the Thomson group, seized the opportunity to buttonhole the president. A few days later, Dr Hammer followed up by writing to Michael Blumenthal, Carter's treasury secretary, a 'Dear Mike' letter in which he referred to his conversation with the President, and went on to suggest various methods of tax reform. A leading role was also played by a Washington lawyer called John S. Nolan, who is the CBI's lobbyist here. And, just in case you were in any doubt about how little chance the British taxpayer stood when faced with the convergent pressures of the American political and business establishment, one of the corporations that played a leading role in the lobbying drive was Allied Chemical – an investor in the same North Sea consortium as Occidental, Getty and Thomson – associated with the Meyer family, which also owns the *Washington Post, Newsweek,* and one of Washington's main TV stations.

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SPAIN
Julie Flint

Will the new Basque violence wreck Suarez's government?

A democracy under threat

THREE MONTHS AGO, after a four-hour police riot at the funeral of two young officers killed by Basque terrorists, an interior ministry official remarked privately: 'We can manage this. When it gets really bad is when they start attacking the families.'

On 6 January, they started. As a young Civil Guard drove off from a discotheque with his fiancée, Basque gunmen pumped 10 bullets into the girl's body and eight into her companion.

The double killing gave the separatist commandos of ETA – Euskadi Ta Askatasuna: 'Basque Land and Liberty' – five victims in as many days of the new year and their first female scalp, marking a savage new phase in their battle to 'liberate' the Basque country from Spanish dominion. The lesson is clear: if a 20-year-old girl from faraway Cadiz is fair game in the Basque struggle, anyone is. If ETA cannot be stopped, all Spaniards will pay the price. Or, as interior minister Rodolfo Martin Villa put it: 'either we finish with ETA or ETA finishes with us'.

Unless the Right does it first. The men who lost power virtually overnight after ruling unquestioned for 40 years are fast losing patience. In the last week, ETA has assassinated in Madrid, at a distance of less than a mile, the military governor of Madrid and a supreme court judge, the second judge killed in less than two months. Its message can get no louder: 'Whoever, whenever and wherever we want.'

Twenty years after its birth as a non-violent organisation dedicated to keeping Basque culture alive in Franco's police state, and 10 years after its first, carefully weighed 'execution', ETA has degenerated into a band of killers looking more and more like rebels without a cause. The statistics cannot be justified: of the 134 assassinations notched up by ETA between 7 June, 1968, and 31 December, 1978, more than 60 came in 1978 – a year in which Spain, three years after the death of Franco, got free unions, elections and a democratic constitution (and at least one woman felt free enough to tell government television she intended to see the new year in 'on drugs').

Once supported by a majority of Basques, respected as the toughest anti-Franco fighters in Spain, ETA is now supported by only a minority. Few, however, express their opposition openly. One who did, journalist Jose Maria Portell, was buried last July, riddled with bullets. Fear dominates the Basques' relationship with their self-styled 'liberation army'. In a poll taken last month, for example, almost 50 per cent of those questioned had 'no comment'. A bare 15 per cent said ETA violence was justified.

Yet this unrepresentative, increasingly fanatical army is getting uncomfortably close to freezing, even wrecking, Spanish democracy. After two military assassinations this year, and a declaration of 'armed war against outstanding members of the armed forces', King Juan Carlos has been forced to remind military chiefs publicly of their duty to him. The Francoist newspaper *El Alcazar* has called openly for rebellion against premier Adolfo Suarez. 'The state is being devoured by its enemies,' the paper declared. 'Those institutions not affected by the political decay governing Spain have a duty to combat a situation of extreme gravity with the exceptional resources unique to them.'

Although the king insisted that 'the terrorism of a few cannot prevail over an entire nation's desire for freedom and peace,' the assurance rings hollow. With an assassination a day, terrorism might prevail. If not to sabotaging the general elections scheduled for 1 March, at least by ensuring that Suarez falls short of the vote of confidence needed to give Spain strong government without a return to the Right – an option fewer Spaniards would oppose today than a month ago.

THE NEW HARD LINE of ETA bears the personal stamp of Maguel Angel Apalategu, a 23-year-old Basque from Ataun, a valley town known as the Belfast of the Basque country. Under Apala's leadership the 'military wing of ETA has dominated the more moderate 'politico-military' wing that formed the mainstream of ETA at Franco's death. His followers make other European terrorist groups look like boy scouts. Apala's rise to the top of ETA shortly after the disappearance of politico-military leader 'Pertur'* in July 1976 is indicative of the new unscrupulousness of ETA. Although ETA blames the disappearance on Francoists, Pertur's family accuses Apala of murdering him following a disagreement over a kidnapping. Sources close to the politico-military say Apala, after killing a young kidnap victim against Pertur's orders, summoned his rival to a 'peace parley', suggesting he travel alone to lessen the chances of detection. Pertur agreed, overriding the apprehensions of his bodyguards, and drove out of St Jean de Luz with Apala early on 24 July. Less than an hour later, Apala was back in town, drinking wine in a cafe. Pertur was never seen again.

Given the probable fate of Pertur, there must be some doubt as to who killed 'Argala',* the ETA leader who, dressed as an electrician, touched the two wires that blasted Franco's first premier, Luis Carrero Blanco, to death six years ago – although it is difficult to believe that ETA could kill the man who killed Carrero Blanco, an act for which many Spaniards will give ETA eternal credit. Argala, like Pertur, was a supporter of negotiation with Madrid – a policy rejected by Apala.

Martin Villa's refusal last week, a fortnight after Argala's death, to leave the door open to negotiation might indicate there is no-one left to negotiate with.

Apala's aim, spelt out in a communiqué last year, is to force the army to intervene in the Basque country, discrediting the liberal government which refuses Basque independence and casting ETA in the role of a Viet Cong or FLN. Although Basques accuse Suarez of giving them a local government and then withholding both power and money, few want to see the army sent into their provinces. Equally few want the independent Marxist state ETA wants.

Under Apala, ETA has attained an efficiency government officials envy. Led by a high command of 30, the organisation is divided into three arms: commandos, estimated at 200, informers and link-men. Only one man in each commando unit has any channel to higher echelons. To further increase secrecy, many ETA gunmen are no longer salaried servants – 'liberados' – but youths trained for a single hit and then sent back to their normal lives, knowing neither who trained them nor who ordered them.

This caution is reflected in ETA strikes and is a prime cause of their incredibly high success rate. In a book entitled *Insurrection in Euskadi*, ETA stresses that no attack can be launched unless in optimum conditions:

> It is not advisable to skirmish if the imperialist occupier has superior forces, if he is weak but close enough for other enemy units to rush to his aid, if he is not isolated or if he occupies strong positions and we see we cannot succeed. In this last case, contact must be broken and retreat immediate. Knowing when to retreat is a characteristic of the commando.

The efficiency of the terrorists, who are known to have received training from Cuban military personnel in Algeria, is all the more apparent for the inefficiency of their adversaries. In their hunt for the assassins of military governor Gen. Constantino Ortin, police have so far shot dead a 15-year-old boy and arrested four musicians and a biology teacher guilty of having the same surname as an old ETA leader.

Despite a massive police drive that has netted 46 supposed commando units in the past four months, only two Basques detained have been charged with murder. On balance, the drive may have been counter-productive: like many Spaniards, Basques detest the seasoned Franco policeman in charge of the anti-terrorist team and, with helicopters constantly overhead and plainclothesmen constantly underfoot, are not growing in love for the 'occupying forces' ETA is fighting.

Notwithstanding its massive escalation of the past three months, ETA is flush financially, having piled up more than 250 million pesetas (£1.8 million) last year in bank raids, pay-day ambushes and 'revolutionary taxes' demanded from some 800 wealthy Basques. A little reminder of the dangers of non-payment was given recently when a commando killed a Basque builder who had denounced an extortion demand two years earlier.

Under this pressure, more and more Basques are taking their money and families out of the Basque country – followed by ETA. The organisation is now known to have roots in several non-Basque cities, including Granada and wealthy Costa del Sol resorts like Malaga.

Despite the shakiness of the new ETA's base, its political strategy is as lethal as its military planning. With the dissolution of parliament, the country is in a political limbo until the election of a new government. Reform legislation needed to flesh out the new constitution is still untouched. The police and the military are dangerously vulnerable and share ETA's desire to see Suarez's reformist government fall.

If Suarez's police can do no more than round up the usual suspects in coming weeks, elections will begin to look doubtful.

**A code-name unrelated to his real identity.*

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London Diary

☐The UN decree that this is the International Year of the Child has started the whole argument off again. While I have every sympathy with those already born with that terminal disease, life, I cannot but feel that it would be a whole lot simpler if there were fewer of them around. First in the arena this week was Professor Peter Huntingford, whose appearance on the *Man Alive* television programme about contraception will doubtless bring him more of the abusive letters to which his advocacy of abortion, when it is desired, renders him liable. A man of gentle address and fine intelligence, he is sometimes perturbed by the public's misunderstanding of his position. About a third of his students at the London Hospital, he estimates, are deeply religious and he has no intention of trying to convert them. Nurses are more of a problem. If they have conscientious objections, making his patients feel guilty and unhappy, why, he argues, are they working in an abortion service? The anti-abortion lobby is fighting back. SPUC, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, has already organised a big April rally in London. The society claims 24,000 members and the backing of 183 MPs. 'This has never been a Christian organisation' explained Phyllis Bowman, one of the founders of SPUC. A former agnostic she is now Roman Catholic. 'The Chief Rabbi was the first religious leader to give his support. We know that the foetus is alive, and it's so easy to slip into neo-Fascism.' Diane Munday, of the British Pregnancy Advisory Bureau, is equally wary of both SPUC and LIFE, the overtly Catholic anti-abortion group. 'Dismissal of them is very foolish – particularly at a time of minority government, when every crank group appears important out of all proportion to its actual numbers. What women don't realise is that they are being politically manipulated.' LIFE, she feels, encompasses the crumbling church's need to bring together the 'ensoulment of the foetus' and the Catholic Mothers' Guild's compulsion to knit little boottees. Heaven save us, it should be an interesting and, I hope, unproductive year.

☐ The management of the *Sunday Times*, a doughty band of optimists, has been taking comfort in the fact that, according to one opinion poll, a significant proportion of those who switched to the *Observer* or *Sunday Telegraph* after the closure found the alternatives no better than the *Sunday Times*. What they ignore – and who would not wish the *Sunday Times* back again? – is that in the first week of the survey, 10 per cent found the alternatives just as good; but, a week later, 16 per cent found them equally agreeable. 'If you project this forward,' a numerate *Sunday Times* person explained, 'what it means is that you only need half this lot to stay with the opposition and we've lost our lead. If, for example, 40 per cent of our readers went to the *Observer*, and only half of them stayed with it when we started up again, then we've lost it.' What's more, he added, the heating was switched off, and it was all very depressing.

☐ Shooting starts at Chelmsford Prison soon on the first feature film of *Porridge*, starring Ronnie Barker of the television series. Not for nothing is the film company called Witzend Productions, Ltd. Paul Ableman, the novelist, was going a bit spare when I spoke to him. He has agreed to write the 'novelisation' of the film in four weeks flat, finishing on 1 February. As a self-confessed avant-garde novelist, Paul is engagingly unaverse to turning the honest penny rewriting the brilliant scripts of Dick Clement and Ian la Fresnais. His last novel, *Tornado Pratt*, took him four years to write. He was paid peanuts for it and is now resigned to the fact that he cannot earn a living as an avant-garde novelist. Witzend are paying him four times as much for a month's work – a sum which, calculated at the usual niggardly publishing rate, gives him about 1·7 years in which to write his next serious novel.

☐ What moral stance to adopt when confronted by tortured climatic variations? One day it is freezing ('a raging inferno,' AA spokesman comments): the next it is mild, with the *Guardian* personal column full of advertisements for 'hardly-used snow-blowers, all-wheel drive, ex-Ministry, as used in airfields.' I was convinced of the seriousness of the situation only when Mrs Thatcher televisually threatened to tax strikers living on social security if they had failed to practise secret balloting. Does she not realise the serious bureaucratic strain? It is almost impossible to get benefits anyway, without imposing a further tax to cover the cost of collecting the tax on such non-existent *largesse*. My hemiplaegic brother summed it all up. He had no heating, due to the social workers' strike, and his supplementary benefits book had failed to arrive. No, replied the cleaner when he rang the local DHSS office, there was no-one to deal with his heating problems or his lack of money. 'But it's only three o'clock,' my brother expostulated. 'Sorry, dear, they've all gone home – it's too cold to work.' It took three days to thaw him out.

☐ A reader points out that things are no better in Peterborough. Recently translated to a council flat from his detached country residence, he complains that there is nowhere to pluck pheasants. It is not that he has anything against Peterborough Development Corporation: on the contrary, he applauds the attempt to create a reasonable environment for all, with piped television and heating. 'It's just that everything's different. I mean, show these people a pheasant and they think it's a seagull,' he writes. He felt particularly bitter because someone had given him a brace of birds and he had nowhere to throw the bits. In desperation, forbidden by the PDC to sully the new township with feathered detritus, he had to drive several miles to the nearest wood to pluck them. 'There's not even a game larder to hang them,' he added. The heart bleeds.

☐ Michael Kaye, managing director of the London Symphony Orchestra, is understandably annoyed at the current controversy in *Gramophone* suggesting that London has lost its place as the centre of musical excellence, and that no conductor worth his baton will record here any more. 'As a nation, we love to deprecate ourselves,' he says. 'I find running an orchestra rather like driving a bus, finding the petrol, and collecting the fares all by yourself. This does not mean that musical standards suffer – quite the contrary.' I know what he means. London orchestras are under-subsidised. But because of this, by definition, the best musicians gravitate to the orchestras where standards are high enough to guarantee sufficient work – and that does not mean just advertising jingles. In the last year the LSO has recorded Tchike's 4 & 6 with Karl Bohm, Beethoven with Jochum, Mahler with Levine, *Pulcinella* with Abbado, and Andre Previn all over. The LPO has Solti, the LSO boasts Abbado, Bohm and Jochum, the BBC Rodzestvensky, and the Philharmonia, Muti and Maazel. With such eminence how can anyone argue that London has become a mere forcing-ground for minor conductorial talents?

☐ 'Barclaybank,' say the advertisements, 'not just a cash dispensing machine, a 24-hour automated cashier.' After an encounter with one, a friend has become totally paranoid. She wanted to deposit money originally, but pressed the cash withdrawal button by mistake. Realising her error she tried to correct it by asking for no pounds. The machine thought about it and asked her to repeat the instructions. She did. The drum whizzed round, went berserk, and finally came up with a 'Not in Use' sign. A little upset, my friend went for a walk for two hours or so to let the machine recover. On her return the Barclaybank automated cashier *recognised* her and went mad again. She has now given up, but asks me not to reveal her name, just in case.

☐ Since *graffiti* became fashionable, it has long been a plaint that ladies were not up to that particular art form. In general, it is true. Most are decorated with hearts, arrows and 'Marilyn loves Kevin'. Gratifying, then, to find in the *Roebuck* in Hampstead a new, more acerbic, line: 'I'll be buggered if I join the Liberals.'

Ruth Hall

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ When we realise the problems of Iran it is a relief to know we have the Queen and members of our Royal Family to keep Britain stable. — Letter in *Evening News* (Gwenfron Roche)

☐ Southwark Council is toying with the idea of spending more than £1,500,000 on a private television link so that its top officials can see one another when they make internal telephone calls. The borough is one of London's poorest and may have to raise its rates by 44 per cent this year. — *Evening Standard* (J. R. Soames)

☐ About 350,000 commuters were affected by the dispute. Many of them had to find alternative methods of getting to work, and some did not bother to come in from long distances. A Southern Region spokesman said that it was wrong to say there was chaos. 'You can only have chaos if you have people and trains, and today we had neither.' — *Guardian* (Martin Kender)

☐ Until the introduction of legal aid, high-priced lawyers' services were available only to the well-to-do. This undesirable state of affairs had, nonetheless, one desirable result in that ordinary people were reluctant to enter into litigation. — *Daily Telegraph* (Richard Beams)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

From NEW STATESMAN, *15 December 1978*

Institutionalised anti-semitism

Sir, As a Jew who fled from Russia just two months ago, I absolutely agree with your analysis of Soviet anti-semitism (NS 15 December). I would like to add only that the most favourite and effective means of Soviet anti-semitic propaganda is the system of closed Party-sponsored political lectures (delivered at offices, factories, universities, etc during working hours). At these lectures large masses of Soviet citizens are regularly (twice a month, to be exact) brainwashed by high-ranking Party ideologists. The anti-semitic propaganda in 'open media' (the press, books, TV) is rather sophisticated and 'between the lines', but here the pogrom appeal is more straightforward and primitive. Here are some examples:

Sixty per cent of American congressmen are Jews, others are non-Jewish pro-Zionists;

Solzhenitsyn is a Jew; his real name is Solzhenitser;

American Jews control the press of that country;

The world Zionist and US military/industrial complex dismissed President Nixon for his policy of detente with the USSR (so this is not only the point of Yemelyanov's memorandum);

Zionists have followers among Soviet citizens of Jewish origin. Our duty is to expose these elements. We must help these people not to become traitors as well as we helped the Volga Germans to avoid mass betrayal during the Great Patriotic War (EDITOR'S NOTE Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the entire population of the German Autonomous Republic on the Volga, about 1.5 million people, were deported to Kazakhstan and other parts of Soviet Central Asia, where they remain.)

I heard all this personally between 1968 and 1978 at the lectures of Ivan Monakhov, the official lecturer of the Leningrad Lenin District Party Committee.

(The author has asked for his name to be withheld 'for I left my family in Russia'.)

Marx without whiskers

Sir, So you've brought out your big guns to refute Marx's theory of value? My congratulations! . . there's only one hitch. How do you know, Mr Editor, whether your big gun – the Economics Professor – is not actually up the pole? . . .Tell him Comrade Goldstein thinks he is, and tell him further – Comrade Goldstein challenges him to a public debate on the subject under your auspices! That is, you pay for the hall, allowing free entry for the public – I won't ask you for a penny expenses.

Your Manchester professor is wrong. Marx does not say that all commodites exchange at the VALUES (*werte*) or even at their PRICES OF PRODUCTION (*Producktionspreise*). In the chapters on absolute and differential rent, Marx makes it clear that agricultural and mining production, being generally of a low organic composition of capital sell at P (i.e. at Price of Production) plus an increment. Furthermore, Marx differentiates between the INDUSTRIAL PRICE OF PRODUCTION of a commodity and the COMMERCIAL PRICE OF PRODUCTION, i.e. between factory selling prices and then wholesale commercial and retail prices. Moreover, the VALUE of a commodity is not – as your professor thinks – in Marx's eyes something EXTRANEOUS to the commodity itself, but actually something inherent or intrinsic in it, i.e. the SOCIALLY NECESSARY LABOUR.

SOLOMON GOLDSTEIN
(an industrial worker)

72 Wilmot Street
London E.2

Sir, A debate on Ian Steedman's views began in 1973. Then I, among others, pointed out the inescapable road he was treading – the rejection of Marx's derivation of price and profit from value and surplus value (see the *Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists* Autumn 1973 p42-43). However at that time – not really understanding his own ideas – Steedman argued that there were 'solutions' to the so-called transformation problem which 'provide a simple way of making a basic Marxist point: capitalist exploitation is the source of profit' (*ibid p21*). Today, very much wiser and a Professor, he argues that Marxists 'must begin by ceasing to imagine that (narrow) exploitation explains profits'. While he might now understand his own ideas a little better he has still not begun to understand those of Marx.

In his book *Marx After Sraffa* Steedman refused to consider two existing, adequate and contemporary refutations of his views. As he took up, in his own words, the more 'responsible "defences" of Marx' we must assume that not only were these refutations "irresponsible' but further they appeared in a less than respectable journal *Revolutionary Communist.* They were my own article 'Value and Price in Marx's *Capital*' in *Revolutionary Communist* (1 Jan 1975 p31-49) and Peter Howell's article 'Once Again on Productive and Unproductive Labour' in *Revolutionary Communist* 3/4 (Nov 1976 esp p50-53). The Marxists ('Traditionalists') replied to Ian Steedman over three years ago. He refuses to answer them.

DAVID YAFFE

49 Railton Road
London SE24

Answers to racism

Sir, I draw your attention to Rashid Karapiet's statement (Letters, 22/29 December) that 'one *fact* [his italics] about the Anti-Nazi League cannot in honesty be gainsaid: until it appeared on the scene there was no organised attempt to beat the fascists *at their own game* [my italics]'. The fascists' game features hatred, violence and mob rule, and it is interesting that supporters of the League now feel strong enough to declare their own attachment to these values. Some of them may not know or care that the game in question was last played to a finish in the German cities in the early 1930s.

KINGSLEY AMIS

Flask Walk
London NW3

Against the constitution

Sir, Having read with interest Julie Flint's article on the Spanish constitutional referendum and the current political situation in this country (NS 22 & 29 December) we feel obliged to correct certain points made about the referendum results. An 8 per cent anti-constitution vote is indeed claimed by the ultra-Right, and while this result may be true in very conservative regions such as the under-developed Cantilla, it cannot be accepted for other more industrialised and politically aware parts of Spain such as Catalunya, Pais Valencia and Euskadi, where many radical left-wing parties were also campaigning for a no to the constitution. These included all the Trotskyist parties, a high number of Republican parties and all the radical nationalist parties. Although it is impossible to tell what strength all these parties have until the results of the March general elections are known, it will at least be clear that all of the 8 per cent anti-constitution vote cannot be attributed to the ultra-Right.

Secondly, the nationwide abstention of 38 per cent can certainly be largely explained by the political disenchantment, the insulting television campaign and the effect of the high abstention figures in Euskadi on the overall national figures, but it should not be forgotten that other left-wing parties like the MC and the PCOM were also campaigning actively in favour of abstention, as was the anarchist trade union, the CNT. Lastly, many feminist, gay, ecologist and other groups were also advocating a no vote or an abstention in the referendum.

CARAGH HALPIN
EMILI ZAFRILA

Cami dels Lladres 255
Pais Valencia

A dreadful monument

Sir, Does Bernard Cohen (Letters 5 January) suggest that there are no politics in the art world or that they are not, comparatively speaking, petty? The more so, surely, in that they are based on personal taste rather than popular support. Does he claim that this particular John Moores Exhibition was not art-political, although it overwhelmingly endorsed large abstracts? The question is not only who is chosen but also who sends in. An open send-in is all very well in theory, but where, for instance, does it get the Royal Academy Summer Show? Mr Cohen might agree with me that that too is sometimes a dreadful monument to the petty politics of the art world. But whether the fault is the Academy's or the artists' who won't have anything to do with the Academy is another matter.

Mr Cohen's other points seem rather niggling. When the three major prizes are worth £6,000, £3,000 and £2,000, what are the ten £100 prizes if not consolations? As for the paintings being unidentified when they are put in front of the judges, I find it hard to believe that Mr Cohen – a painter himself – would not be able to recognise the work of established artists. Was he, for example, ignorant of the identities of the three artists singled out for major prizes? Not that it would matter if he wasn't. I was criticising the judges' taste not their methods.

JOHN SPURLING

48 Ladbroke Grove
London W11

Keeping secrets

Sir, I would be readier to accept Mr Mortimer's advice (London Diary 29 December) about my Official Information Bill if his brief comment had shown some understanding of its purpose. In the first place it is not confined to official secrets but provides also for public access to official information without which we are unlikely to get effective Parliamentary scrutiny of the executive.

Though it may sometimes be better as Mr Mortimer says 'to keep laws which are plainly ridiculous', in this case a plainly ridiculous law stands in the way of important reforms. Nor is there any guarantee that future governments will not use it: prosecutions do not have to succeed to be an effective means of harassing opponents; furthermore the present government has already promised in a White Paper its own thoroughly unsatisfactory reform. I do not claim that Part II of my Bill which deals with wrongful disclosure is perfect: but if Mr Mortimer reads it closely he will see that it is a great deal better than either Section 2 or the White Paper.

CLEMENT FREUD

House of Commons

Correction

In last week's article on the Kirkby co-op we printed a picture of Alan Lee Williams MP, rather than Alan Williams MP who was referred to in the article. Apologies to both Mr Williamses.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Food Glorious Food

I rather tend to despise those who, even late in life, still continue to grunt and grumble about past injustices and cruel childhood exploitations and juvenile deprivations and not being 'understood' and so on and so forth. They were often, I suspect, only too well understood. Children, however deceitful, cannot help wearing their characters on their faces. The voices of these malcontents can run whiningly on and prove irritating but I have a means of escape and, being now less sharp of hearing, to put it mildly, in one ear than the other, I simply swivel my faulty drum in their direction and muffle the worst of their moans. I do not, I do hope, whine much myself, and indeed have no single reason for so doing, and it is therefore more in a spirit of surprise and wonderment rather than of resentment that I recall the slices of brawn that used all too frequently to be placed, as our sole supper dish, before us at school.

Brawn was not a substance that ever appeared for meals at home and so the word brawn merely meant to me the sort of muscular strength that was so greatly admired ('He was a mass of brawn from head to foot') in the heroes that figured in the *Boy's Own Paper*, or B.O.P., yarns, a literary description that was much preferred to the rather tamer 'stories'. If brawn happened to be allied to brains, well and good, but brains were an unnecessary embellishment and brawn came first. And in point of fact one needed when young, as the devoted and expert excavator in these fictional fields, E.S. Turner, has reminded us, a kind of mental brawn with which to withstand some of the worst emotional shocks available in the B.O.P. One single edition contained drawings of a freshly decapitated man, blood pouring from his trunk, with another male victim hanging, rather feebly, from a tree. These were followed by hints on taxidermy for boys with strong stomachs by Colonel Cuthell (late 13th Hussars), starting with directions for stuffing the heads of birds ('Pull the eyes out of their cavity', etc.).

I did not greatly care for the Colonel's tips ('Crush the skull slightly to ease off the skin . . .') or his dead heads and, when tackling this edible brawn later on and at school, it was just as well that I did not know that its origin too was a dead head. Gazing at my first slice of this comestible as it lay uninvitingly and destructive of appetite on the plate, I wondered whence it came. One saw at once that it was of composite structure, part pink flesh, part brown, part jelly, with white sections (bone, I suppose) and things that looked repulsively like some animal's bristles, and which were indeed exactly that. Modern children, almost universally allowed nowadays (except for those lucklessly living in starvation level countries) to be what we called 'faddy', will be amazed to learn that there was no question at all of our *not* eating the brawn. Parading the tables was the brawn's supplier, our housemaster's wife, who, at the least sign of reluctant munching, would hover over the intending hunger-striker and, spacing her words carefully out, just say, and in icy tones, 'Eat . . . that . . . up!' Boys so addressed would cheerfully have gobbled a chair leg if it were the only way to remove from them this awesome figure. She was a dear at heart and kindness itself, but not in the presence of brawn.

And now, in the strange way that things happen, and stirring half forgotten memories, there has come dropping into my lap, so to speak, the 'classic' recipe for making brawn. In the regrettable absence of an NS cookery section (well, what's so special about chess?), I am happy to place it before you. The bristles come, as I feared, from a pig and indeed it is a porker's head entire that we are going to need. It may conveniently be carried home from the butcher's in an old-fashioned gentleman's hat-box (the handy method, as you'll recall, of transporting that murdered lady's head in *Night Must Fall*). Then go and boil your head (as we used merrily to phrase it when meaning 'shut up and buzz off'), first removing all its bristles, though how effective an electric razor is on a pig's cheeks and jowls, experience alone can tell. Simmer head with herbs and spices for quite some time, filling every nook and cranny of the house with rich smells and steam, and this, at 'Myrtlebank', will be the ideal moment for an unexpected caller to call ('I mustn't stay: I see you've got something "on"'). When piggy's nut seems thoroughly cooked, separate flesh from bone and gristle, reduce stock to a thick and gelatinous consistency and, if you are still with me and not hurrying, handkerchief pressed to mouth, outside, plunge all into a basin where it will, next day, have transformed itself, when turned out onto a plate, into a solid and glistening brown mound, apparently delicious to some. Slice away at will. I am told that cows' heels, after a thorough going over with Lifebuoy, work in much the same fashion. Next Week: New Ways with Cold Bread Sauce.

Another culinary and once-a-weekly scholastic treat lay in things which, I learnt, called themselves 'faggots', another edible that never graced our home table (my father would, in the spirit of fun, probably have thrown them at my mother, an activity which their cricket-ball dimensions encouraged) and a word which hitherto solely meant to me what witches and downtrodden characters in fairy-tales were for ever gathering in woods. I am aware that in the U.S. the word faggot has also an unfortunate human application (wonky gentleman) so perhaps kind American readers will here concentrate on its edible meaning. The faggots, in unheated form, were all too visible to us in the window of the butcher's shop that we passed on the way to classes. They were of a fawnish colour and each was enclosed in what looked like a rather small and grubby string bag of the kind that used to contain tennis balls. They sat in sullen rows in those large and enamel butcher's trays. If, on our way back to lunch, the trays had emptied themselves, we could be fairly sure which dish was going to smile a welcome after grace.

I am astonished to find that the original recipe for faggots requires the inclusion of 'bog myrtle'. Would, I ask myself, the myrtles so freely available at 'Myrtlebank' act as well as bog ones, which must surely be an altogether commoner and less distinguished variety and well down the herbaceous social scale – not, I hasten to say, that I am planning to construct faggots, a to me distasteful jumble of pig's liver, lights, fat and onions, mingled with breadcrumbs and enfolded in sections of 'the lacy, fatty membrane surrounding the stomach and guts of the pig' (what one had seen as grey string).

You wonder perhaps, as I did with brawn, whence come these nutritional pleasures. They come from the enormously enjoyable and interesting *In Search of Food*, a splendid survey by David and Richard Mabey, fraternal gastronomic historians, of 'Traditional Eating and Drinking in Britain', the illustrations alone being worth the price of admission (Macdonald and Jane's, £6.95). Here, divided into districts and in superb variety are the origins of Lea and Perrins (both chemists) sauce, its manufacturing process still a secret, the ingredients of squab pie, how to make illegal poteen (a kind of home-made whiskey) and legal drisheen (Irish black pudding), Severnside fishermen of elvers and the best way to eat them (fry in bacon fat and mix, omelette fashion, with eggs), rows of Bradenham hams, and Wiltshire 'tracklements' (assorted garnishes), Devizes pie (tongue, sweetbreads, veal, bacon, hard-boiled eggs and deer's liver, if you have it handy), Lowestoft kippers fresh from the smokehouse, and recipes for bannocks and haggis (serve with turnips and mashed spuds).

The mere mention of eel pie will set all dedicated gourmets madly salivating and further mouth-waterings are provided by descriptions of Lancashire eccles cakes and parkin, Wensleydale cheese, Harrogate toffee, Melton Mowbray pies and a full range of brewery products to wash them all down with. *Bon appétit!*

Roger Woddis

To Mistress Margaret Thatcher

(After John Skelton, died 450 years ago)

Madcap Margaret,
Sweet Cuckoo-flower,
Gentle as falcon
On trade union power:
With manicured madness,
More anger than sadness,
She strikes at badness
So furiously,
So curiously,
So spuriously,
Politicking
On every thing
Designed to bring
The commuter set
Out in a sweat.

A juggernaut
Of little thought,
So overwrought,
You would swear blind
The milk-white mind
Of Madcap Margaret,
Awaiting her hour
So long in coming,
Was turning sour.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Paul Johnson

The Insiders

The Cambridge Apostles: the Early Years by PETER ALLEN *Cambridge* £12.50

The best proof that there is such a thing as the 'genius of a place' is to compare Oxford and Cambridge. At a superficial level they are so alike; at heart, so different. Oxford is a jungle, red in tooth and claw, a theatre of possessive individualism, where it is every man for himself, and where the victor must fight to stay on his lonely pedestal. At Oxford even friendship is a form of rivalry; and power is exercised through personal publicity. By contrast, Cambridge is a placid pool, concealing murky structures. In its silent but active depths, power is allocated and maintained by means of networks, with which the individual aligns himself; or, to vary the metaphor, the undergraduate entrepreneur sinks his private capital into a collective bank and in due course draws his dividends.

These contrasting characters are ancient. The outstanding documented example of a Cambridge network is the St John's circle of Reformers which emerged in the mid-16th century. It revolved around Sir John Cheke, Master of St John's, Roger Ascham, Sir Anthony Cooke and his clever daughters, one of whom married William Cecil and another Nicholas Bacon. This group became the heart of the Elizabethan establishment, and Queen Elizabeth herself may be classed as an honorary member of it. It set the doctrinal, political and intellectual tone of the reign. But it had no occult institutional framework and did not survive the destruction of its overt power by James I and his creatures. Far more persistent, because secret and institutionalised, has been the influence of the Cambridge Apostles, who go back to 1820 and are still active today.

It needs to be said at once that Peter Allen's book does not lift the lid off recent Apostolic activities. He deals with the period between 1820 and 1850, in effect the system of relationships revolving round F. D. Maurice, James Spedding, Arthur Hallam, the Tennysons and Richard Monckton Milnes. He is a painstaking Canadian scholar, who has unearthed some important documentary collections, and if he does not arrange his material very well he at least succeeds in explaining to us how the club's characteristic methodology worked.

What began as the 'Cambridge Conversazione Society' was nothing more than a debating club limited to 12 members. The secret of its durability was that it never attempted to achieve homogeneity of views. Instead it preached the idea that opinion or belief was merely the superstructure of personality. The society was protean; it flourished through osmosis. Members read papers and voted on them but disagreed within a framework of mutual tolerance (and admiration). One of them, William Cory the pedagogue, wrote of 'that method of minute comparison of opinions without argument which I believe to be peculiar to the small intellectual aristocracy of Cambridge'. To another, Henry Sidgwick, the essence of Apostolic method was 'the pursuit of truth with absolute devotion and unreserve by a group of intimate friends'. Intimacy was perhaps the keynote, preserved by reunions and continuing friendships. But there was an underlying ideology, of a kind, based upon the desire for moderate and civilised change. 'Throughout its known history,' says Allen,

> the Society has been persistently modernist in its influence, and since the content of modernism alters from one decade to another, the views that have predominated among the Apostles have changed accordingly, from Coleridgean in the 1830s to Marxist in the 1930s, and beyond.

In the period covered by Allen the Apostles were not, on the whole, associated with political change. They sought moral improvement, and the most important of them, Maurice, deliberately turned his back on politics. Their one venture into revolutionary action, the attempted overthrow of Ferdinand VII of Spain in 1831, ended in fiasco. Maurice rejected not only Whig-Liberal politics but the Benthamite utilitarianism which underlay them. He favoured the self-knowledge to which the Apostolic method lent itself: the individual discovered 'the presence and goodness of God' not in 'anything appertainable to the order of this visible world, but as a life and power in the depths of his own heart'. He translated the Apostolic principle of agreeing to differ into a broad, inclusive Anglicanism. Young Gladstone called this 'the Cambridge philosophy' and tried to found a similar club at Oxford, naturally without success. Gladstone then went on to a lifetime of practical reform in the Oxford manner, leaving Cambridge to work on a change of social mood. One eventually produced universal suffrage, the other Bloomsbury.

The Apostolic method, irresistible as it was to sensitive young men, contained many dangers. The rejection of action led to the languid role of the spectator, who watches a fearsome storm at sea from the safety of land; Apostles often quoted to each other Lucretius's famous lines beginning *Suave mari magno*, and they are reflected in Tennyson's 'The Lotus-Eaters'. Equally, Apostles were liable to slip into cranky manifestations of the religious spirit. Some dabbled in mysticism and charismatics – 'speaking with tongues'. The unburdening of the soul which took place at Apostolic meetings could, and did, degenerate into vulgar confessionalism. The Victorian Apostles sometimes looked like an exalted version of the Salvation Army or a Moral Rearmament of the intelligentsia.

More serious, however, was the risk of freemasonry. In the 1840s an adult offshoot of the Apostles surfaced as the 'Sterling Club' and attracted notoriety. An American observer noted in 1852:

> When a member of the club publishes, one of the fraternity has a footing in the *Edinburgh*, another in the *Quarterly*, a third in *Fraser*, a fourth in *Blackwood*, and so on – among them all there is a pretty good chance that his beauties will not be hid, or the reading community allowed to overlook his merits.

From another quarter it was attacked as a nest of heresy and atheism, and two members, Bishop 'Soapy Sam' Wilberforce and the future Cardinal Manning, found it politic to resign. But the hard core of Apostles kept their identities and actions secret, and mutual help in the Masonic manner continued to be one of the attractions of Apostolic selection.

Indeed the way in which new Apostles were chosen was necessarily elitist, based upon the Gnostic notion that truth is revealed to and transmitted by an elect few. The Apostles called, and call, themselves 'the wise and the good'. Reviewing Tennyson's first collection, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, Hallam insisted that only a select number would understand its merits but enlightenment would gradually infuse the multitude. This note was unwisely echoed by Tennyson himself in his second collection of 1832, prefaced by the lines

> Mine be the power which ever to its sway
> Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
> May into uncongenial spirits flow.

Venomous old Croker seized exultantly on this arrogant claim to lash the poet, who bitterly regretted the lines and in consequence published nothing for a decade. Tennyson, in fact, was a loner, not an Apostle; by nature an Oxford type. Though always claimed by Apostles as their greatest son, he was a member only for three months and, as Allen indicates, out of sympathy with their manners and methods. It is significant, too, that the Apostles did not spot Thackeray. They had a sharp eye for talent but tended to be blind to genius. Hence, with some exceptions, they consisted of able but second-rate *apparatchiks*, who flourished mightily thanks to the network. A collection such as *The Cambridge Mind* (1970) based on outstanding contributions to the *Cambridge Review*, 1879-1969, shows the Apostles in a meagre light. The Society was usually greater than the sum of its parts – the real test of a freemasonry – and Apostolic talent has tended to wear badly.

The main objection to institutional elitism, however, is that it makes a virtue of exclusion. Under Lytton Strachey, this became the Apostolic mortal sin. 'Strachey himself', Allen writes,

> perfected the art of unapproachability, and he decisively influenced his generation of Apostles, and through them the Bloomsbury set, for whom exclusiveness became a part of the sustaining atmosphere they breathed.

The destructive art of making outsiders feel ineligible and unwanted was termed by Strachey and Leonard Woolf 'the Method'. It was the Apostolic emblem. Inevitably, within the charmed circle, elitism became incestuous

Among this week's contributors:

PAUL JOHNSON's *National Trust Book of British Castles* was published last year.

R. W. JOHNSON is the author of *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* (Macmillan).

EDWARD MORTIMER is a staff writer on *The Times* on Middle East affairs.

JOHN MORTIMER has just completed a new series about Rumpole of the Bailey, to be shown on BBC in the spring.

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or narcissistic. There was, as Allen observes, an element of latent homosexuality among the Victorian Apostles, and sometimes rather more. Strachey and Keynes made it the chief cement of the Society. This was fatal. In Victorian times the Apostles may have harboured heretics, but as a group they were always within the law. During the 1920s and 1930s, what had hitherto been a comparatively harmless, though objectionable, secret society took on some of the aspects of a political conspiracy. Nothing corrupts more quickly and thoroughly than secret machinery operating without control. It is no accident that the brotherhood became tainted with treason. There was, to be sure, only one Philby, or so it is charitable to suppose. And it was all – was it not? – a very long time ago. Nevertheless, one prefers the Oxford method, of open success, openly arrived at.

Edward Mortimer

Cadillacs and Camels

A House Built on Sand: A Political Economy of Saudi Arabia by HELEN LACKNER *Ithaca Press* £9.50 and £3.50
Green Grows the Oil by SUZANNE ST ALBANS *Quartet* £5.95
Arabian Time Machine: Self-Portrait of an Oil State by HELGA GRAHAM *Heinemann* £7.50
Saudi Arabia Today: An Introduction to the Richest Oil Power by PETER HOBDAY *Macmillan* £6.95

On the opening page of *A House Built on Sand* Helen Lackner refers to the 'recycling' of petrodollars as

> a euphemism invented to give an aura of respectability to capitalist efforts aimed at ensuring that any money spent on oil imports is repatriated as fast as possible in sales of questionable value.

It is in the arms industry, of course, that such efforts are most conspicuous, but the publishing industry is clearly doing its bit. One of the burdens of being labelled as a Middle East 'specialist' these days is that one's desk is constantly clogged with coffee-table books about this or that Gulf state. Some of these are overtly commissioned by the government of the state concerned. Others give themselves away by their portraits of and references to the relevant Emir, which vary from the respectful to the sycophantic.

Quartet Books Ltd is a particularly assiduous performer in this field, and seems to have reached the conclusion that you can sell any sort of rubbish about an oil state, especially if it is written by a woman. In fact it is hard not to be struck by the high proportion of books currently appearing on Arabia, both good and bad, which are written by women. Women writers are evidently attracted by the challenge of a society which has become suddenly so wealthy and influential while remaining male-dominated in some spectacular and even grotesque ways. The Sheikh of Arabee has acquired in his own right a power to fascinate which once had to be exercised through the mediation of Rudolf Valentino. And he in turn finds it hard to resist the (to him) exotic mixture of femininity and self-confidence that constitutes the Western 'woman writer'.

There is material here for one highly readable 'human interest' book, but that book was published as long ago as 1976. It is of course Linda Blandford's *Oil Sheikhs* – a classic demonstration of the adage that bad taste is good journalism. Linda Blandford skipped round the peninsula in a long nightdress, enjoying the hospitality and (apparently) the confidence of many prominent Arabians of both sexes who clearly had no inkling of the sort of book she was intending to write. She herself probably thought she was being nice about most of them, and tried to protect some by concealing their names – a device most unlikely to succeed in a society as small and interrelated as the Arabian upper crust.

Of course Linda Blandford's book differed from the Quartet coffee-table type. It did not aim at the government or company bulk order for handing out to visitors/clients. It aimed at, and found, a mass market of prurient Westerners and no less prurient English-speaking Arabs. But it has complicated the task of the Quartet authors, who seem uncertain whether they are supposed to be emulating or atoning for it. In 1977 Quartet brought out *Arabian Days*, on Abu Dhabi, with text by Edna O'Brien: 160 pages of 'women's' writing of the most embarrassing kind. ('Oh why, I thought, will they not be simpler, why will they not take off their mental veils and speak their thoughts freely?' – this because the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates was unwilling to discuss his private life.) And now we have *Green Grows the Oil* by Suzanne St Albans:

> a one-woman view of a closed, reserved, enigmatic society [the UAE] bursting out of its medieval straitjacket into the 20th-century, without any period of adjustment or adaptation, direct from the flying carpet to the jet, from the camel to the Cadillac

– and so on, with that density of clichés, for 190 pages. This time an ordinary-shaped book with no big glossy photographs to look at: meant, perhaps, for the plane rather than the coffee-table, as a 'light' introduction for the incoming expatriate wife.

Edna O'Brien, 'novelist and poet', presumably has a licence to write badly. But who is Suzanne St Albans and how does she get away with it? 'Besides being a writer and traveller she is also a painter. She is the author of three previous works of non-fiction, *The Mimosa and the Mango*, *The Road to Bordeaux* and *Uncertain Wings*.' Not much of an explanation there. 'She now lives in Monte Carlo.' Ah – perhaps a PhD in plutocracy? The British 'Ambassadress' seems surprisingly helpful. But it is not until page 103 that the game is given away: ' "Your Grace", says Omar, who usually calls me by my name, but is being at his most formal today.' Of course, how stupid of me.

Her Grace (for it is she) started off with 'the vague idea of getting an impression of the

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country and its population through interviews with the Top People . . . and any members of the public who had ideas of their own or tales to tell'. No luck. 'The Arabs, who have been severely bitten [*sc.* by Linda Blandford] have retired into their shells and battened down the hatches.' *Sic*, *sic* and *sic*. So she falls back on gossip and personal observation. And, to do her justice, among the first things she observes is that the actual work in Abu Dhabi is done by immigrants, mostly illegal, from India, Pakistan and Baluchistan. No air conditioning for them.

> With tent flaps up all around for coolth, they can be seen solemnly making their beds out of vast bundles of rags on rickety wooden bedsteads. Kneeling on the ground, they shave out of an old Pepsi tin full of cold water, before splinters of looking-glass sellotaped to tent-poles.

But

> any twinge of pity you might feel for this curious twilit sub-culture is quickly dispelled by the thought that here at least they are much better off than in their own country.

So that's all right then.

It is this dimension which is lacking from Helga Graham's otherwise incomparably better book on Qatar. Helga Graham writes faultless, even elegant English. She clearly chose her subject with care and devoted a lot of thought to it, as well as spending much more time in the country concerned than a coffee-table authoress would. She calls on the West 'to break with its age-old habit of either romanticising or vilifying Arabs' and more or less succeeds in showing how. Her discussion, for instance, of the position of women in Qatari society is balanced and full of insight. She compares it to Victorian England:

> they want more breathing space, more freedom to come and go, more school outings and women's societies, more opportunity to meet young men. But at most they want to have their corset only less tightly laced; they do not, at this stage, want to do away with it.

And she compares one of her interviewees, an earnest pioneering young headmistress, to Dorothea in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

Her method is to let Qataris, male and female, speak for themselves, in a series of interviews deftly edited to make coherent monologues. The result is something of a tour de force in demystifying the oil-rich Arab, making him (or her) seem less exotic, more 'normal' and for the most part both sensible and sympathetic. Many of them show an uncomfortable awareness of the extent to which their country is dependent on foreign labour and expertise, and express anxiety to reduce it. But the only two non-Qatari voices we hear (apart from the author's) are those of an English football coach and an Irish engineer. The Irishman says, 'I think mention should be made of the part played in building this country by the Indians and the Pakistanis' – and compares it to the role of the Irish navvies in 19th-century America. But the Indians and Pakistanis are not heard from, and nor are the Egyptians and Palestinians who make up so much of the white-collar workforce.

Helga Graham tells us she was given free access to people in Qatar 'on the basic understanding that the book would not touch on formal politics nor offend religious sensibilities'. It is therefore a completely different type of book from Helen Lackner's on Saudi Arabia, which is unashamedly not only political but hostile to the Saudi régime. Readers who do not share its political standpoint will find Lackner's book irritatingly schematic. Others will be irritated by its style (there is a misplaced apposition on page one, line three) or will suspect the author has never actually been in Saudi Arabia. She claims to be 'primarily concerned with the fate and interests of the indigenous population of the country, and more particularly with its less wealthy members', but one is not given any clear picture of what life for these less wealthy members is actually like or what their main grievances are. In fact Lackner admits, and bewails, the lack of any articulate and coherent opposition based on an analysis of the specific conditions of the country – which clearly do not fit any preconceived Marxist model. But she does present enough facts to give one serious doubts about the validity – whether economic or social – of the present development strategy.

For me at least the book has a good deal more bite than Peter Hobday's, which gallops through much the same facts in a breathless journalistic style without stating any political premises, and fails to reach any memorable conclusions. Those who pay for books out of their own pockets are advised to wait for the book on Saudi Arabia begun before his death by the late David Holden, which is now being completed by Richard Johns of the *Financial Times*.

Fascists

A Social Psychological View of the National Front

by Michael Billig

Department of Psychology
University of Birmingham, England

The book examines the official propaganda of the National Front, analyzes the basic ideology of the party, and includes interviews with ordinary members. A work of undeniable significance to all concerned with mass psychology and the possible rebirth of authoritarianism.

vii+394pp., Cloth edition published December 1978 by **Academic Press** *at* **£16.50** *(0.12.097940.3), Paper edition + 8pp. photographs, published January 1979 by* **Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Ltd.** *at* **£3.95** *(0.15.004004.0)*

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R. W. Johnson

Dave Spartacus

Racism and Political Action in Britain by R. MILES and A. PHIZACKLEA *Routledge* £7.50 and £3.75

This book is so typical a product of the race relations industry (as we have come to know and love it) that it constitutes a major challenge to one's ironic sensibility. Almost all the contributors seem torn between a carefully posed social scientific dissection of their subject and a passionately partisan avowal of their determination to eliminate and destroy it. When, as sometimes happens, the two styles blend, the impression gains ground that

Gavin Ewart

On Being Invited to Write Sentimental Verse About the Highlands and Islands

The Isle of Mull! The Isle of Mull!
Kept pure for sheep, fox, rabbit, gull!
Och! no drab, doxy, trollop, trull
could e'er come near it!
Sea round MacBrayne's invading hull –
in dreams I hear it!

MacBrayne! Who once was simply known
for sea transport, for boats alone –
how can you ever now atone –
now not just steamers,
connecting *coaches* make Mull groan!
Alas! for dreamers!

His coaches! Och, they are so grand,
like rhinos charge across the land –
you couldna sell them secondhand
(one careful owner),
like fiends they rush the pilgrim band
off to Iona!

They scorch along yon coastline road
and squash the hedgehog and the toad,
they need no whip or spur or goad –
cokes, Scotch ale, bitter,
each carefree sanctimonious load
scatters its litter!

Aye! Mull is one great litter bin
for plastic wrapping, bottle, tin –
they throw them out, she takes them in,
as mobs are ferried
off to the Holy Isle where Sin
and Kings are buried!

It needs no second sight to say
Mull has become a motorway!
No use to hope, no use to pray!
We see, each minute,
the Limbo of this latter day –
and we are in it!

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the earnest work of concept-formation, theory-building and jargon-reformulation actually forms part of the onward struggle against Evil (the NF). The social scientist as white knight, er, well, black prince. Hence the strong sense in several chapters of bearing witness, of testimony. (Michael Banton's conclusion actually speaks of one contributor, John Rex, as 'testifying'.) Certainly, there is no shortage of first-person pronouns. The editors' introduction is full of 'We are also arguing that' phrases, while the first word in Rex's chapter is 'I'. Thereafter his paragraphs are quite normally introduced in the grand platform manner: 'The point which I am seeking to make here', 'What I am trying to say here', and even 'It should be recognised that I am not saying that'.

Occasionally, too, the shade of Dave Spart hovers powerfully, as in the editors' conjured-up hypothesis of a West Indian being attacked outside a pub. Their solemn conclusion on this (entirely imaginary) case is that 'it could be argued that a West Indian stood more chance of being attacked than a white Englishman because of the racism that is an important feature of English culture'. The editors, in their long and interesting survey of racial attitudes in Brent, also let drop such undying turns of phrase as 'the cyclical pattern of capitalist development which brought Willesden into existence'. Finally, of course, all race-relations-industry products have a strong market appeal: the shock to our liberal sensibilities they can induce with interminable examples of National Front and other excrescences. My own favourites here were the *NF News* headlines, 'Make Whites Clean Toilets Say Asians' and 'Black Junkie Rapes Crippled Widow of 73'.

That said, there remains much of interest in this book. Rex's contribution, arguably the central one, warns us to expect a period of 'defensive confrontation' between black movements and the white establishment which, though likely to be couched in terms of virtual war with British society, will simply constitute a bid for fuller incorporation into that society. All the contributors seem a little haunted by this notion, with its implication that those who seek radical empathy with militant black movements are likely to be led up a false trail. The editors comment, surely correctly, that the black population will find it difficult to mount *any* single, coherent strategy and that the heightened racial tensions to which such tactics would give rise would probably lead to a large-scale black withdrawal from the political process altogether.

The book's real strength lies, however, in its local case studies of Willesden, Bradford and Moss Side, the last providing an example of unusual racial harmony and even warmth – a result of a successful inter-racial community campaign against the local council's housing plans. With these studies may be grouped Caroline Knowles's fascinating account of Labour politics and anti-Semitism in the East End of the 1930s. Her conclusion, that there is no basis for believing in any sort of cultural continuum between 'Jew-baiting' and 'Paki-bashing', runs counter to the assumptions of several other contributors and might profitably have been taken up by them. To argue for such a continuum, she points out, implies an ideology of racism floating above institutions. Others here seem to believe in this: she doesn't.

In several respects, the most sheerly professional piece in the book is Christopher Husbands's chapter on British-American comparisons of racist voting, though Stan Taylor's tight little chapter on the National Front bears comparison. Banton's conclusion is a little disappointing, however, containing not a few trenchant asides and aperçus, but not really pulling the collection together. He is, indeed, rather dubious that terms such as 'racism' and 'race relations' have a 'more than conversational' power.

One general conclusion might have been that the bogeyman, racism, is not all that frightening and is anyway not very vulnerable to the line of attack favoured by most of the contributors. There is certainly a body of diffuse racist opinion in the country, but only a tiny minority willing to give it active political expression. Whatever opportunities this minority has it owes, above all, to the present economic recession. Even so, it has lost ground and the existence of a vague, weakly-directed public racism has been of little real help to it. Its path is barred by the existence of a once hegemonic and still far stronger Conservatism. The real struggle against the leather-jacketed NF militants who adorn this book's cover may not be that waged by militant socialists, militant social scientists or even Rastafarians. The confrontation that really counts for the Front is with the Tory party on the one hand and with the unemployment statistics on the other.

John Mortimer

Mysterious Ways

Illustrissimi: The Letters of Pope John Paul I
Collins £5.95

To the anxious atheist constantly on the watch for a divine intelligence behind the universe, endlessly suspicious that God might indeed be working his purpose out to some inhuman and quite unacceptable end, nothing last year gave more food for thought than the brief history of Pope John Paul I. What on earth was God up to? To assemble Cardinals from all over the world in solemn conclave, to watch over their deliberations, to see His candidate (for such, on the High Authority of Cardinal Basil Hume, was Albino Luciani, Patriarch of Venice) triumphantly elected: and then around 30 days later to cause His lately elevated Infallibility to snuff it in his sleep, shows at the worst a profligate expenditure of papabile material, at best an incalculable sense of humour which is, I suppose, much in line with the general conduct of the Omnipotent Controller of our destinies.

Now that I have read *Illustrissimi*, another, more literary explanation suggests itself. Did someone high up in the Celestial Arts Council simply read Luciani's book and decide to revoke his grant? A pope who was capable of writing a work of such astonishing banality simply would not do. So the decision was taken, and Cardinal Hume had to pack his grip and be off to Rome again. We are left with nothing but the memory of John Paul I's glinting glasses, his soft engaging smile and this slim volume which provides fascinating material for the student of religious affairs.

The late Pope's book consists of letters to various dead but distinguished people; the list includes Dickens, Christ, Pinocchio, Christopher Marlowe, Goethe and Mark Twain. The letters are extremely affectionate, the recipients are addressed as 'dear' frequently and throughout. They are not, however, communications which it must have been a joy to receive; this is principally because the late Pope appears to have little or no interest in the recipients or their tastes. He bangs on at them indiscriminately about *his* favourite topics, which appear to be, in order, the immodest nature of contemporary beach wear, the danger to young couples of lengthy and unchaperoned car journeys and a vague and quite undirected feeling of sympathy for the poor ('Dear Dickens . . . Many workers are unemployed and uncertain of their jobs. They are not always protected properly against accidents'). He also believes firmly in the Devil, telling Marlowe that the late Pope

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had spoken firmly on the subject, affirming Lucifer as a 'real person' (the great free-thinking playwright probably had few doubts as to this – it was the existence of God he doubted). Finally the letters are suffused by the simple cheerfulness of a man certain of his place in Paradise ('Dear Chesterton . . . The sense of justice . . . demands that the good we do . . . should be rewarded').

So Pope John Paul I is no doubt now in Heaven, but as he enters the celestial reception we can, perhaps, imagine a certain amount of diving for the exit, at least by the celebrities present. I mean, does Goethe really *want* to be addressed at length on the Venice Film Festival (some of the films, it seems, are as 'morally bad' as the stories of Boccaccio). Does Walter Scott want a somewhat slanted lecture on modern fiction – 'Your heroines, Sir Walter, have sensitive feelings and often blush. Today's fictional girls never blush; they smoke and drink and giggle . . .' Does the late Empress Maria Theresa of Austria snap her fan with some impatience as His indefatigable Holiness approaches to tell her that 'Today women wear scarcely anything . . . even [when] trying to enter churches.' And when the Empress retreats the Pontiff buttonholes one Paolo Diacono, a teacher at the Court of Charlemagne and the distinguished author of the *History of the Longobards*. 'Illustrious historian', the tireless voice goes on, 'there are fabrics on the market so light that they are perfectly suitable for wearing in the heat and can make garments just a little bit more ample.' Even the unhappy Pinocchio cannot escape. 'Dear Pinocchio . . . If one day you have a girl friend then respect her. Protect her against yourself. You'll want her to keep herself pure for you, won't you?' 'Oh *yes*, sir,' Pinocchio no doubt answers enthusiastically and beats a hasty retreat, his nose growing longer by the minute.

What is most remarkable about these letters is, in fact, their bland unreality and their deep reluctance to grasp the truth about the distinguished men and women addressed. Dickens was a supreme humanist; his works show him to be quite uninterested in the complexities of Christianity, which he used either to provide a cosy Christmas at Dingly Dell or to make a dramatic point in a harrowing scene of poverty. Mr Pickwick had many interests but I doubt if he would be fascinated by the teaching of St Thomas about fallacies. And Figaro, ah well, of course, Figaro not only announced the age of the common man, he was a barber; so he can be told about the extravagant hairdos of young people and, yes, mini-skirts.

The famous have gone. The Pope is left alone with his letters and you close the book with bewilderment and dismay. Is this *really* what it is, that great religion for which thousands have endured burning and torture, which inspired the world's greatest painting, its most profound poetry and the illumination of its greatest mystics? Has it all dwindled to a vague concern for 'the poor' and an obsession with mini-skirts? Has the Prince of Darkness shrunk to a boy driving a Deux Chevaux to a camping site in Viareggio with a girl in hot pants? Did all the prayers and the Cardinal's manoeuvres and the white plume of smoke produce nothing but this benevolent mouse? Of course the answer is no. If God exists He is far more dangerous, mysterious, terrifying and absurd than this book would have us believe: He is, after all, the God who organised the sudden death of Pope John Paul I.

Valentine Cunningham

Going Places

A Different World by ZULFIKAR GHOSE *Macmillan* £5.95
A Twentieth-Century Man by DAVID BENEDICTUS *Blond & Briggs* £4.95
The Right Honourable Chimpanzee by DAVID ST GEORGE *Secker & Warburg* £4.50
Night-Side by JOYCE CAROL OATES *Gollancz* £6.50

A Different World is nuts on Brazil. At least its strutting narrator – 'I, Gregório Peixoto da Silva Xavier . . . known the world over' – is keen on the 'idea' of Brazil. And keener still to keep that idea pure from the kind of internationalist uniformity that turns his family ranch into a cosmopolitan playcentre and invades Brazil with Leftism. So, plying the reader the while with his heavy line on the awfulness of nations mimicking each other – he has a habit of pomp and sentence too eagerly picked up from his dully thoughtful friends – Gregório takes to counter-insurgence and right-wing terror.

It's some relief that the novel refuses him a totally smoothed run. Casual suggestions about kidnapping ambassadors and their like, dropped only to keep him in with leftist groups, are embarrassingly fruitful. The police will misread his intentions. But though ambivalent success is all his Buy Brazilian politics are allowed to earn him, Gregório's incessant rhetoric against communist cant, Ché-ist tyrannies and other foreign barbarisms nevertheless holds his novelist's support. And disconcertingly so, for this emotionally defended Brazil is in practice denied the substance that might give its idea actuality. We can grant the error – we're exhorted to, anyway – of making Brazil a 'European idea'. But what does Gregório's Brazil amount to? A preciously wordy little, dimly perceived and vaguely put, whose major characters, especially Gregório of the many existences in Ghose's previous novels, are only verbose shadows. A feeble country of a baggy mind, alive only in minor characters like Rubirosa the pock-marked secret-policeman, in a mistress here, a whore there, and in bits of action on beaches and in brothels which could be anywhere.

Neatly arrayed precisions of place are, by contrast, what help *A Twentieth-Century Man* work so arrestingly. Shuttling between Belsen in 1944 and London in 1976, the parallel narration fills out the case of Alan Radbone, a crusting Tory MP who rescued his Dutch wife Selma from the death-camp to which he went as a young military interpreter. The story is, in fact, as much hers as his. In this respect the title misrepresents the width of the novel's preoccupations as wildly as does *Women in Love*. But in its claim to a 20th-century significance the title isn't spinning awry; for Belsen's horrors didn't simply write a programme for the Radbones' future, they're shown to provide pervading clues to modern British times.

Telling comparisons and contrasts multiply. Water was short in Belsen; England is dry in 1976; Selma is a haunted soak. They starved in Belsen; in London they gorge in restaurants and at parties. The British burnt the camp's diseased hutments; in their antagonism to him Radbone's son and wife are both pyromaniacally inclined, while firemen bemoan the low water-pressures. Great play is made with naked bodies, then and now; in despair and sans everything but her blanket Selma returns to Belsen solemnly to strip among the tourists. Sadisms abounded and abound: Radbone enjoys fladge from Nazi-uniformed ladies; he has cruelly neglected his adopted son; the Vice Squad turns itself on with Moors Murders tapes. Of course, the *plus ça change* meanings occasionally look a bit too patly pointed, as primly fixed as times and places are precisely located. But no reservation of this sort can deny the novel's powerfully indignant rendering of human cruelties, and its saddening reflections on the final helplessness of righteous indignation to prevent inhumanity.

Politicians come in much lighter vein in *The Right Honourable Chimpanzee*, whose breezy plotting has a clever chimp made Britain's Prime Minister. Once all the parties have settled on dim Ken White as the best non-controversial choice to head a government of national unity, it's a cinch for a couple of Oxford dons to switch him for their well-trained monkey, White King. And 'the most simian politician in living memory' ('if this was an animal, it was a highly political animal') suits everybody. He's no security risk. The Queen is amused. Talking chimps do well on TV. He can pull off Churchill impressions. He wows the French with Baudelaire quotes and bawdy songs about *bananes*. His secretary Drusilla's pink pants turn him on, so she's kept happy.

In short, sweetly satirical shots keep hitting the target, nicely discomfiting a recognisably familiar parliamentary cast – like Mrs Trippingly the Tory leader, and Reg Bakewell who wetweats to Euwope, and grinding Brenin Gwynn, Ulster-Unionist come-lately. And all this without mentioning other marks of the novel's grasp of recent Westminster history – such as the chimp's liking for tomato sauce or Drusilla's bossiness over the inner (Canteen) Cabinet. Cheering stuff. Indeed, it's only when we learn one half of 'David St George' was the late Bulgarian playwright, novelist and nasty-accident victim Georgi Markov that the failure of the Secret Service's 'nasty accident' department to nobble either Ken White or White King seems perhaps a shade too casually wrought.

Eighteen stories from Joyce Carol Oates as good as these in *Night-Side* will always be welcome. As usual, they're pretty plight-full. They're about the widowed, the alone, the mad, the alien, crazed parents and loopy children, women goading each other to hurtful revelations, kids daring each other to broach the forbidden, people haunted by fancies and dead parents and voices from the other side. Within the bourgeois calm of offices and colleges and homes, the comforting fixities of streets and creeks, the normality of fishing or researching or going on holiday, everything looks grim, marginal, bereft. And yet these tales potter unperturbedly about the horror they entertain. In one way they are the more perturbing for that. In another, this calm reflects the characters' schooled acceptance of suffering, acceptance that is prelude to discovering spots of brightness even in horrid circumstance.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Russell Davies

Bless Thee, Botham!

I am sorry that the Voice of Sport, as heard in these pages, has been stilled for some weeks past. The fact is that the Kidneys of Sport have been recovering, rather reluctantly, from a surgical trouncing that has left your correspondent's brain still befogged by a giant daily dose of antibiotic bombs and a ferrous intake so copious that the next threat to his health must surely be rust. I find I can only sleep when pointing towards magnetic north.

It is disappointing to return from such a character-building experience with no piercing new insight into one's interests, but there it is. What one expected to be true is true: sport looks better than ever to a flattened man. A swirl of antibodies and iron filings only enhances the great mystery of sport's chanciness. Much of the rehearsed 'entertainment' available to invalids in this country is for some reason disgracefully poor at the moment, and the bored, hypercritical patient soon tires of its predictable routines; but sport goes on surprising even those who are playing it, so it can hardly fail to keep the expectations of the viewer alive. Then again, it is also true – and I was surprised to find myself falling for this – that health itself is a wonderful thing to see displayed: almost comically uplifting at times. The mere sight of Ian Botham crashing around a cricket pitch in recent weeks has cheered me up. I don't think I've ever seen anybody so preposterously laden with well-being – actually heavy with it, like a fruit. It is reassuring that Botham is as bad as ever at disguising his 'shock' short delivery, otherwise I might be tempted to approve of him wholeheartedly.

The test series in Australia has been much the most real and sustaining sporting contest of the last month or two. Anyone not incurably sniffy about cricket will have given the game credit for surviving its crises of administration and personnel and coming up with an international conflict of seemingly unimpaired richness. It is remarkable how the natural strength and complexity of cricket's structure can so easily disguise and compensate for diminished standards of individual performance. The worst worry one has had, in fact, concerned the presentation of the game on Australian TV, which at first seemed likely to have more than a touch of the Rose Bowls about it. Unless I was hallucinating at the time, some gents came sky-diving in from the upper atmosphere to present the opposing captains with a coin to toss at the start of the series; and then our fellows emerged from the pav. in new blue Horse-of-the-Year-type helmets with transparent earphones attached. Botham immediately contrived to be struck on his – a comforting reassertion of human nature amid the new technology.

Botham came close at that moment to being given out caught off his skull, and the standard of umpiring has gone on worrying me ever since. True, nobody has recently been 'caught' off so farcically thunderous a smack on the pad as Gooch got a few games ago; and the many lbw's have begun to look more convincing since the ball (at Melbourne and Sydney) has begun to keep low (though Hogg didn't look too eager to claim Boycott's first-baller on Monday last). But something about these Australian umps' style of decision-making still makes me wonder. It's the semaphore system, the way they snap to attention, swinging the rigid digit high aloft as if to perform some unspeakable act of Herriotry up the backside of an invisible elephant. It just doesn't look like sober justice to me. But then I suppose good old Toothless Tom Spencer doesn't look the picture of lynx-eyed acuity to the Australians, either.

Meanwhile, the tragical history of Geoffrey Boycott seems to be well on into its final round of soliloquies. I find that distance, in more than one sense, has increased my sympathy for the wry-mouthed hero. Being on the other side of the world, he can make no more wild-eyed orations in the Parkinson confessional, nor flummox our moral philosophers with his delicately perverse concepts ('Playing under disloyalty' was a masterly flirtation with paradox). It can't be much fun for Boycott, gradually realising that the world sees more nonsense than sense in his protestations; nor is Australia, one imagines, the best place on earth for a single man, forty-ish, to sort himself out. Whenever we actually see the man on TV highlights these days, he is again an isolated figure, toiling in the outfield in his obsessively neat, crisp togs (and surrounded, it would seem, by placards and posters of the most creatively abusive kind). It can no longer be a game for Boycott, if indeed it ever was. The radio interview he gave at the weekend, in which he explained that his concentration on England matters was impaired by continuing thoughts of Yorkshire, struck me as the sound of a man dropping himself from the team; certainly if I had wanted to retain my place in an England XI I would have been at pains to disguise this preoccupation, if not deny it altogether. The probable substitution is a terrible blow to purists: Boycott out, Tolchard in. Boycott, whatever his personal oddities, is a technical perfectionist, while Tolchard is a scampering flat-batter of the most hilarious improvisational kind. But he has seized his tiny chances wonderfully well on this tour, and should be encouraged to sue somebody if he is allowed to return to England with a hearty batting average and no caps.

Obviously the most interesting new player thrown up by the games so far is Rodney Hogg. Whether he is anything cleverer than just fast is not yet clear – speed alone is enough to beat all but three or four of our batsmen – but at least his speed is not in doubt. By all accounts he is medically a bit weird, being subject not only to traditional asthma but to a kind of hysterical breathlessness at moments of excited achievement – something akin, probably, to the 'orrible turn that carried off Ipswich's Roger Osborne at his moment of triumph in last year's Cup Final. (Osborne has not played a first-team game since that day; there must be a story there somewhere.) The great thing about Hogg, though, is that for as long as he lasts he is immensely strong, having an exaggerated lean-back in his run-up and a great explosion of bunched muscle in the delivery itself. This is where our fast men, nobly though they always perform, are deficient. In a sheerly mechanical sense, they are no efficient generators of power. The notorious example is Old, a wonderfully subtle bowler on his rare day, but a man who finds it regrettably difficult to keep muscle, bone, nerve and sinew in the wondrous patterns laid down by their maker. Hendrick, were he truly to explode in the delivery stride, would buckle those giant hinges at once; and as for Willis . . . he is really the wonder of the age, because his consistent success is achieved only after he has fought his arhythmic nature to submission, time after time, all the way to the crease. I understand how he feels, so I should like him to know that his blistered efforts have done me good. And I hope it will not be too long before he, like me, is fit-again, with a hyphen.

Opera

Peter Conrad

Dancing Class

Salome *Covent Garden; further performance on 13 January*
Salome *EMI* £8.75

The Salome of Hildegard Behrens, now to be seen at Covent Garden, is an interpretation formed by Karajan, with whom she has sung the part at Salzburg and on EMI's new recording. In Strauss as in Wagner, Karajan has decided on an aesthetic policy of pacification. The ugly affray of the drama is soothed by the lyrical hypnosis of the music. In Karajan's productions at Salzburg, the stage is darkened, while an aureole of light beams on the conductor's rostrum. Standing there, Karajan snubs the drama by conducting somnambulistically, his eyes closed. He upsets the late-Romantic equilibrium between music and drama, performing the operas of Strauss and Wagner as symphonies in which the voices aspire to the condition of musical instruments. Heroic vocal assertion is prohibited: his singers are encouraged to croon, murmur and whisper.

Behrens in his recording of *Salome* is therefore not a virago intacta like Birgit Nilsson or a rampant, ardent wanton like Leonie Rysanek, but a shy girl inhabiting a private dream. Rather than commanding the Judaean court, she sings nervously to herself. The drama, thanks to Karajan's control of musical dynamics, is virtually silenced. Salome and Narraboth whisper surreptitiously to each other about the rhetorician Jokanaan, an alien who has the temerity, among all these softened voices, to rail and rant. Herod mut-

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ters to himself on his entrance about the ill omen of the spilled blood, and the guard informs him of Narraboth's suicide in a confidential aside. Herodias, no hectoring shrew, contradicts her husband by lowering her voice at him. Salome sullenly hisses her refusal to eat or drink, and is reduced to toneless panting as she awaits the execution.

The expression denied to the voices is claimed by Karajan's orchestra, which is Salome's thought-stream. Her character develops only when she is not singing, during the orchestral interludes: in the interval of frustrated panic after Jokanaan returns to the cistern, when the orchestra suggests to her the means of revenge, and in her dance, when the girl awakens as a cruel, fecund woman. So intent is Karajan on dissevering music from drama that at Salzburg he forbade Behrens to dance, and engaged a look-alike to disrobe on her behalf. The most important stage in the character's psychological progress is elided, and Salome in the final scene on his recording therefore undergoes not a dramatic degeneration but a musical transfiguration. Instead of a necrophiliac triumph, Karajan plays the conclusion as an eerie threnody, and Behrens sings sorrowfully about the beauty she has destroyed, more like the wistful Marschallin at her dressing-table than the frenzied Elektra celebrating an assassination. When Salome hears the *'geheimnisvolle Musik'*, her own voice has become a mysterious, disembodied fluting. Like Strauss's Daphne wordlessly vocalising as she metamorphoses into a laurel, or like the voice in the *Vier Letzte Lieder* surrendering to the instruments which represent the dreamy soaring of the larks or the free flight of the soul, her death is an incorporation into the orchestra. Karajan's brilliant, perverse achievement is to have made dissonant early Strauss sound like elegiac late Strauss, and to have turned the visceral Salome into a character as refined as Madeleine in *Capriccio*.

In Covent Garden's revival of *Salome*, the conductor is not the hyper-aesthetic Karajan but an energetic, extroverted Zubin Mehta, who allows Behrens more dramatic freedom. The jewel-encrusted cliff of Andrzej Majewski's set was designed for a Salome resembling Gustave Moreau's, an exotic dancer with a lacquered, onyx-studded body. Behrens, however, isn't a symbolist priestess from a Moreau painting: she looks more like a character of Edvard Munch's, gaunt, angular and distraught, gripping the cistern with prehensile claws. Her approaches to Jokanaan are plaintive not voluptuous. She appraises him less as a lover than as a father, worshipfully nestling her head at his feet and childishly longing to touch him. His curse on her converts this wonderment into humiliation and hatred, but at the same time it endows Salome with a new knowledge of herself which sickens and isolates her. Immobile, crouched and cowering like an autistic child, Behrens is indifferent to the domestic and doctrinal squabbles around her, preoccupied with her own disturbing obsession. She covers her ears in shame as Jokanaan rages from below, because she now recognises the justice of his imprecations.

For the first time, Behrens is permitted to dance, and in doing so she dramatises Salome's accelerated passage from innocence to experience, from infantile delight to exhaustion and satiation. She begins, veiled, like a ghost, moving chastely and stiffly. Gradually she relaxes, enticed by the music to discard restraint, until in the last furious measures she becomes abandoned and obscene. Her nakedness at the conclusion is terrifying not arousing: the body she bares is already old. Striptease is a haggard psychological self-exposure. As Herod pleads with her to spare Jokanaan, she lapses again into remorseful, crumpled silence, and when the head is presented to her rather than slavering over it she sobs in dismay. Her voice by the end is wearily faint not jubilant. Herod's soldiers hardly need to kill her: her own grief and self-disgust have done so already.

Television

Julian Barnes

As Nature Intended

I would much rather have been doing other things, but as part of this column's agreement with the NVLA to monitor the level and quality of sex on television, I felt it my duty to watch *Let's Go Naked* (BBC-1), John Pitman's report on what he referred to – perhaps naughtily – as 'the enormous upsurge in naturism'. The NVLA and the NS are in accord, however, that there was no danger of this programme causing any other sort of enormous upsurge; it was monastically ungloating. A Miss Nude America line-up was shot from a distance of about four miles, and, as it seemed, directly into the sun; while Mr Nude America guardedly carried his winner's trophy firmly in front of his other trophy. The flesh that we did see at all closely – whether shopping or casually playing volleyball – appeared to be specially chosen for its pendulous and anti-romantic demonstration of the principle of gravitational pull. The show was about as arousing as the nude coven scene in Polanski's *Macbeth;* Harrison Marks must have turned in his tax haven.

For all his lack of prurience, Pitman didn't compensate by telling us much about the philosophy of naturism ('nudism' is apparently an unacceptable word, since it implies, well, a little too much nudity somehow). But then perhaps there isn't really a philosophy: it's just that lots of people – 15 million in Europe last year – like taking all their clothes off all of the time, and like carrying on doing so. On a marginally more theoretical level, the movement seemed bent – like the guinea-pigs of *Living in the Past* – on some false pursuit of naturalness, misconceived but harmless. Lawrentian fantasies about running naked through fields of waving corn have their Ken Russell appeal; the reality is gashed feet and a buttful of insects. And quite exactly where the sand gets into on naturist beaches was one question Pitman didn't feel he could ask.

What he did ask (quite rightly) was whether it was all about sex. For taking your clothes off can't just be about taking your clothes off: it must involve either a shedding of *pudeur* (with at least some consequences) or a crafty reinforcement of it. One husband, sitting next to his naked wife, chivalrously observed, 'I think it's de-sexing' – as if there was nothing like removing your spouse's clothes to really turn you off. It seemed to confirm what one had always suspected: that puritanism can surmount anything.

Everyone interviewed by Pitman – from middle-aged ladies protecting their breasts with shopping bags in case mother (just mother?) was watching, to the Yugoslav naturist tourist official called Sladovlev Jerko (the terminal *-v* being presumably omitted on grounds of taste) – was remorselessly earnest; and the result was to confirm that, in the face of the evidence of all those *Carry On* films, there is something intrinsically funny about nudist camps. 'He had one unpleasant experience skiing naked, and since then he's worn protective clothing.' Next, an architect with a voice covered in strawberry birthmarks arguing comically, 'As one takes one's clothes awf, one sheds one's cares and worries, and one's class worries, as it wahr.' There is even a naturist vocabulary: a person who refuses to undress at one of their resorts is 'a textile'; hence a town or beach where the two categories of holiday-maker mix is characterised as 'semi-textile'.

Such examples of found comedy put the new Ray Galton and Johnny Speight series, *The Tea Ladies* (BBC-1), in the shade. It began last week, and this week went missing from the *Radio Times*: perhaps it's been taken in for running repairs. There were certainly a few things wrong with the first episode, immodestly billed as by 'Galton and Speight' – you know, like Beaumont and Fletcher, or Middleton and Rowley. The first half, a two-hander straight to camera by two seated House of Commons tea-ladies (Dandy Nichols and Patricia Hayes), got by largely on the calibre of the acting. If there *is* any mileage left in Paki, Irish and British Leyland jokes, then these two fag-puffing crones with their crab-like logic will find it; and the low-life Garnett-style comments on our rulers – 'They shouldn't 'av wars if they can't afford them'; 'They should do like the Jews: have a six-day one' – had their moments. But the second half collapsed badly: Mollie Sugden was given an impossible task as a maudlin Mrs Mopp soliloquising to a heavy bronze statue of Churchill which lurched as she dusted it; and the episode collapsed in that standby of the comedy script-writer, the mass-drunk scene. Since the viewer (and even the television critic) is on the whole sober, this is always harder to pull off than writers like to think: the viewing couch is no easier a place than anywhere else for a sober man to find the company of drunks amusing.

Presumably the main advantage of setting a series in Iceland is that you don't have to pay the camera crew overtime for night shots. You merely film the scene during normal union working hours, and have a character say something like, 'I can't get used to this midnight sun of yours.' This happened during the new three-part Desmond Bagley thriller,

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Running Blind (BBC-1). The other thing you can do is send your hero, one Alan Stewart, to bed with his Icelandic girlfriend in broad nightlight and thus see more. This also happened (NVLA please note); though since the hero, played by Stuart Wilson – last seen as Vronsky in *Anna Karenina* – had totalled a local a few hours earlier and dropped the body down a fiord, it transpired that guilt had temporarily deprived him of his capacity for pre-marital mularkey (NVLA note further, especially the moral implications).

Apart from the setting and this strand of sexual misfortune (the hero earlier castrated a Soviet agent, aiming low while trying to assassinate him), *Running Blind* is very much prep-school-of-Deighton, from the blackmailing controller in the winter warm to the agent on your own side who tries to kill you. The girl-friend is given such suspiciously trite lines that I'm ready to believe she'll be double-crossing young Alan before long, if only to get some better dialogue. When he confessed to her that he was a British agent with a licence to snuff, she went off for a walk, came back, and announced, 'You're still you – you've done what you had to do', and dragged him off to bed. At the moment, the pair of them have just started a fretful flight through the volcanic landscape; tufa the road. The scenery is terrific, and no series is entirely banal if it can contain a two-line customs officer played by someone called Arni Ibsen.

The week's TV 'This English' was perpetuated, as he would probably say, by dear old Frank Bough; though since the circumstances were trying enough for the true sports fan, leniency is called for. After showing brief highlights on *Grandstand* of England's rightly scorned batting performance in the first innings of the Fourth Test, Frank added dolefully, 'There is more fulsome coverage, if you can bear it, at 6.50.' I checked this out, but no amount of fulsomeness could improve the England team's showing.

Art

John Spurling

Milton's God

Blake and His Followers *Tate*
Samuel Palmer: A Vision Recaptured *V & A*

The opening of the Tate's long-delayed extension is at last in sight. Unless further misfortunes intervene it's scheduled for the end of May. Meanwhile the existing galleries are being re-hung and a new room devoted to the Tate's extensive Blake collection and its rather meagre holding of Blake's followers was opened two months ago. Unfortunately it had to be closed again last week when snow leaked through the roof but there are hopes of its reopening by the time you read this. The Blakes are now assembled in glass cases along the walls and the whole room has something of the aspect of one of those special houses for nocturnal animals at the zoo, dark, hushed and approached through glass doors. Considering the adjustments for scale, medium and content that one has to make in order to enter Blake's visionary universe after the comparative worldliness of other British artists, the change is a definite improvement, and the room is also now in historical sequence, so that one enters Blake's sanctum by way of an antechamber containing works by the three older artists he particularly admired: Fuseli, Barry and Mortimer. Blake's followers – Richmond, Calvert and Palmer – occupy the last case inside the sanctum, but here, alas, the grim hand of the Tate's Conservation Department has once more cast its chilly shadow. The nocturnal light, just adequate for the Master's powerful line, is altogether too dim for his followers. The detail of Palmer's magical *Hilly Scene*, for example, is now quite invisible and even Blake's own more heavily painted pieces are half lost in the gloom.

Samuel Palmer, as is well known, ceased to be a painter of genius when, at the age of 32, he married John Linnell's daughter and forsook Shoreham for Italy, London and eventually a suburban house in Surrey. In the exhibition at the V & A there is a selection of portraits of Palmer: aged 19, in his own self-portrait, a melancholy, romantic youth with short tousled hair and a wispy moustache; aged 24, in a miniature by George Richmond, with shoulder-length hair and small beard, looking like a Victorian Christ; aged 30, in a semi-caricature by Henry Walter, wearing rimless glasses and with a long scarf wound round his neck, an early version of Trofimov; aged 58, in a photograph, bald and white-bearded, a tired old buffer in tired old clothes; aged 71, in another photograph, a more lively, almost twinkling old man,

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sprucely dressed in black, with a distinctly clerical air. The exhibition – organised jointly with the William Blake Trust, which publishes magnificent facsimiles of Blake's and now Palmer's work, and accompanied by a peculiarly choice commemorative handbook – includes a few works from the Shoreham period, a whole long wall of large watercolours from the post-Shoreham years (1837-81) and virtually all the etchings, with related drawings and watercolour sketches: this exhibition 'seeks to demonstrate that Palmer's vision of the English countryside was recaptured and in fact extended'.

The large watercolours make a sad display. They are basically prosaic, rather clumsily painted landscapes into which Palmer has tried to inject magic by playing sunrises or sunsets over them. These later works are at once more naturalistic and more unreal than the earlier ones: old Palmer seems to be hobbling along one step behind nature, where young Palmer called the tune, creating an imaginative landscape to which nature might occasionally conform but only by turning itself into a Palmer vision. The way that old Palmer tries to force recalcitrant reality to go through visionary tricks is particularly obvious in the largest watercolours illustrating passages from Milton's shorter poems. Dramatic skies are set behind dark, heavy scenes among hills or woodland. In early Palmers every element in these scenes – sheep, figures, cottages, spires, foliage, corn, even the lichen on a thatched roof – would have cohered, through their subtle range of responses to the light, into a complete visual poem. Here the brightly lit areas seem artificially imposed on the darker ones and the dummy-like figures added as if to occupy the foreground of a theatrical set. Romance and rusticity are at lumpish odds with one another.

Eight of these large watercolours were commissioned by Ruskin's solicitor, but it was not a case of Palmer being forced to do something for which he had no feeling. He loved Milton all his life and chose the subject himself. It was perhaps the difficulty of using colour – 'O! the joy,' he wrote when he first took up etching in 1850, 'colours and brushes pitched out of the window' – and even more the scale which threw him. The small sketches for the Milton watercolours – mostly in sepia wash – and the etchings, which he embarked on afterwards as a record of the series, are in a different class altogether. Compared to the bold stylisation of the Shoreham works, these are still remarkably naturalistic in detail and the landscapes themselves are grander and more opened out, reflecting Palmer's visit to Italy; but the mastery over light – and along with it the vision of an Arcadian ideal – has returned.

Writing to another etcher towards the end of his life, Palmer said, 'It seems to me that the charm of etching is the glimmering through of the white paper even in the shadows; so that almost everything either sparkles, or suggests sparkle.' These are graver, less immediate, less missionary pictures than he made in his first flush, offering a vision of the past rather than of the present, but their means are more delicate and varied and their effect is if anything intensified.

Benedict Nightingale is on a month's sabbatical. David Harsent will be writing the theatre column from next week.

Films

John Coleman

Mars Barred

Capricorn One (A) *Classics Haymarket and Oxford Street*
Empire of Passion (X) *Camden Plaza*
Candido Erotico (X) *Moulin 1*

It has long been, I take it, a common enough belief among us everyday sceptics that man never reached the moon. A moment's thought and it was clear that Khrushchev and Kennedy huddled early over the hot line and said something like, 'Good grief, I can't afford it,' and cut their costs by rigging video matter in studios at a hundredth of the claimed outlay. Why, in the first place, should anyone *want* to leave our cosy old Earth and – given that – why not use the great new medium of telly to gull its inhabitants? *Capricorn One* takes rather wonderfully off from some such premise; it allows we have reached the moon and that but it jibs at Mars; a major flaw is found in the space craft thither directed and the three astronauts are discreetly removed at the last minute. What follows is NASA bending every which way to simulate the planetary excursion. The hauled-off trio are blackmailed into playing captains courageous against a fake landscape; their rocket launches all right but crashes on re-entry; they are therefore dead heroes to the world, expendable items in the cause of preserving a patriotic myth. It is a lovely, clean notion, and Peter Hyams has both written and directed it into a vastly pleasing entertainment.

The buggered-about threesome do not, as it happens, figure greatly in the ensuing frolic. Two white, one black, they go through the token motions, their families at threat; they escape when they realise, after their simulated disastrous splash-down, they are technically corpses; there are a few exciting and inventive sequences during which they crash-land a plane in a desert and are hunted by a marvellously menacing pair of helicopters, giant killer-bees out of Hitchcock or the best you can think of in terms of daylight, sunlit horror.

Where Hyams so notably scores is almost everywhere. His cinematographer, Bill Butler, gets vertiginous slants into the aerial stuff and generally makes the happenings visually offbeat and interesting. The firmer matter of a deliberately jumpy plot concerns a whacky journalist (Elliott Gould) and an interview or so he has with the 'widow' (Brenda Vaccaro, a sort of contemporary Gloria Grahame, than which no higher praise) of the one astronaut to survive the choppers and turn up at the only wet moment of the movie, the very end, in stop-motion, with the President delivering a funeral oration. Very well, something should have been done about this. But what else is splendid is the dialogue, not just the downcast astronaut muttering, 'Here we are, a million miles from Earth and we can still send out for a pizza', but the fresh, Thirtyish tang of Gould and Vaccaro – as he approaches the heart of the affair – tossing lines at each other. There is a verbal agility, an engaging chuck-away lightness here that we have sadly lacked for an aural decade or three. At one point, Mr Hyams downright indulges himself, to my total satisfaction, when he has Gould's long-suffering editor go into a superb monologue: it conscientiously refers to movies about newspaper editors and maverick reporters and it works. This kind of in-play is always the most dangerous trick of the week. Hyams swings it. There is also some broadish satire available, mainly purveyed through a tubby member of congress. It is, in short, the manner of occasion that can incorporate the delicious Karen Black and the tiresome Telly Savalas in bit-parts and have them deliver their goods without their estimable presences shoving a thumb in your eye. As for the Gould role, it is no mean will-he-uncover-the-truth game, either.

Nagisa Oshima, an eclectic Japanese director who has a tendency to turn up trumps, made the one truly erotic film of the Seventies, first called – or translated as – *Empire of the Senses*, and then put bravely out by the Gate as *Ai no Corrida*: a man and a woman literally copulated themselves to death and madness. It was, as I hope I conveyed at the time, brilliant, hard, harsh, obsessed. His *Empire of Passion*, 'Ai No Borei' its original title which we will manfully let pass without comment, is something else again. Based once again on an actual event, it is set in a village back in 1896. Enchanting Seki (Kazuko Yoshiyuki) is supposed to be an impoverished housewife and mother, married to a drinking rickshaw man. Into her life, and further,

This English

Fresh light on Times Newspapers: when the Duke sacks people, they don't just walk out – they run out. We follow with a disastrous misplaced apposition and three near-homophones (the first is an obvious egg-in-the-face from the middlemen, but the others are too far-flung to be blamed on the compositor – and what's that 'still' doing in the third, anyway?).

☐ Notice has been given to over 3,000 staff, and nearly 600 of these ran out on Monday... **M. J. Hussey** *Letter to Staff* (John Wardroper)

☐ Lovely legs first attracted Mr Tom Winsall to Emmie Porter – and 50 years later they are still together. **Surrey Herald** (J. de Moor)

☐ Habit still leads many women to Fifties-style outfits which emphasise erotic points like busts, waists, hips and legs or – in the other direction – to the smocks and yolks of domesticity. **Lyn Owen** *Guardian* (Robin A. Blanch)

☐ Later he foresaw possible sanctuaries in the form of withheld grants and subsidies... *Daily Mail* (Y. Wilks)

☐ Licketstown is one of the finest examples of a 16th century farming village still extinct. **Ella Shanahan** *Irish Times* (Mrs C. Weymes)

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comes a local youth, Toyoji (Tatsuya Fuji), stale from the army and ready for love. Things arrive at an unpretty pass and Seki – who is also said to be 20 years older than her paramour but never looks it – agrees they must do away with her husband: they do, throwing the body down a well. All well and good, you might say, and at a purely story-telling level you would be right. Oshima maintains the narrative thread steadily, pursuably. He is still quite strong on eroticism. Two white stalks of legs raised in an autumnal wood, beneath the local youth, looked like real mad mating.

It is not a bad picture. In fact, having used that word, it is frequently terrific to gaze at. The lighting cameraman was Yoshio Miyajima and he brings off some stunning findings. But there is something fundamentally difficult, at least for western eyes, about what Oshima is up to. Now and again, and it must be calculated, he has *Hollywood* snow falling. More troublingly, he does the ghost bit. Now, Mizoguchi and others have achieved this to tumultuous effect. Here, the revenant rickshaw husband falters between the kind of reality Bergman allowed Death in *The Seventh Seal* and just another whey-faced, grey-faced horror-movie apparition. Nor did I much enjoy the carefree way sexy Seki let her toddling son go hang for all she cared when the local lover was on the job and it frankly doesn't add up that, three years on, the toddler showed no sign of having grown an inch. The director is on record as finding this new *Empire* part of a diptych. I faintly dread the thought of a third panel, these things tending to go in threes.

Mac-men of the world, rush to *Candido Erotico*. It would spoil your fun to retail the plot gimmick, so here goes. The stud can only get it up in public: not that you ever see it up, or see it, come to that. But then I did sleep. The very best sequence is openers. A beautiful black girl and a beautiful white girl are embracing for the benefit of a lady photographer. Just as they are warming up nicely, and I too, old spoilsport snapper says briskly, 'Now you two, that's enough for today'. Good afternoon.

Weekend Competition

No 2548 **Set by A. Boteman**

One way of getting the arts to pay in this country is to sell them properly. If the advertising agency who thought up 'Beanz Meanz Heinz' were approached by the Royal Festival Hall, they might come up with something like 'Brahms Has Chahms' which, splashed over billboards and TV screens, might bring the crowds flocking. Other cultural advertising slogans, please, by 26 January. Maximum five.

No 2545 **Set by W. Sidesaddle**

We asked you for a sonnet on your hopes and fears for 1979 in which each rhyme word was to be anagrammed within its own line.

Report **by Len the Unlucky**

A week ago, there was an unexpected flurry of activity in the mildewed basement of the Complex, where the penurious and rightly maltreated sorters work. When we spotted the gold braid of the Head Sorter's cap twinkling below as he toiled up the unlit stairway towards the *piano nobile*, we realised that something must have happened to stir them out of their quotidian and largely contemptible reality. Little Keith and Fat Jeff leaned over the balcony in a state of mild excitement. But it turned out to be only the reappearance of Tim Hopkins among the contestants. Fat Jeff, who had watched *Charley Varrick* on television over Christmas, batted the sorter down the stairs with a growl of 'We don' seem ta be commoonicatin',' and filed the entry – whose envelope was cutely stencilled 'Special D.' – in the comp folder in the normal way. We can none of us, Jeff sagely observed, afford to rest on our laurels. As for this week, seven pounds each, plus a Bisquit Cognac to Hamill; also one to the ingenious Ewart, though in view of his slip in line 11 (Rhett, not Rett), the lads in the complex have taken a few swigs before sending it off.

This is the time of year when I emit
Vows to eschew steam-puddings and rich meats.
No more high teas, cut out mid-morning eats;
The poundage that my scale tips makes me *spit*.
A *war* on booze! Fried tuber I'll rebut.
With this eighteen carat magna carta,
Falstaff, freed, will be Satrap of Sparta!
Damned if I don't untip my gross input!

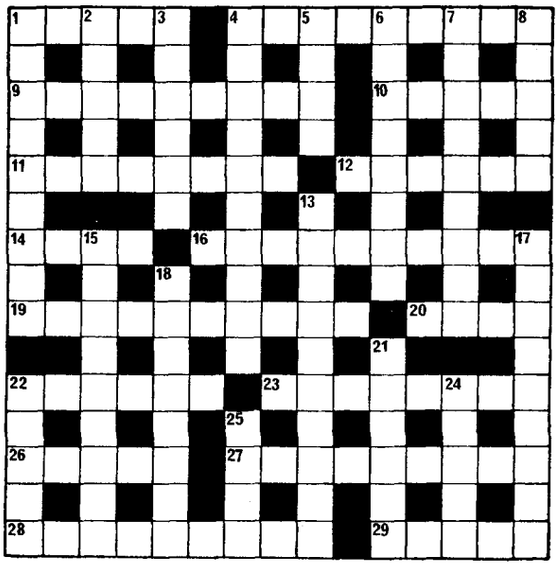
But hold! My hard-got wines, what kind of swine
Of priggish mien could quit those friends of mine?
Brave, thin scarlet line of goodish clarets!
Strap my garters! Such should starve in garrets!
One glass, hark! Oboes sweet sound in my boose!
That war (eruct) on booze, a truce! A truce!

GERRY HAMILL

O strict definer of hard lines, refined
torturer, with poisons in your Ur-retort,

Weekend Crossword 1289

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1289, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 23 January.



ACROSS

1 Kind of type for a page by a lord (5).
4 Exultant as a bird with a ring (9).
9 Draw rooks as symbolised by man with spade (9).
10 Advertises cream pastries (5).
11 Explorer holds half of life to be a charm (8).
12 Preaching and how to make it suitable for paper (6).
14 Blow for a detective (4).
16 Hungry tailor (10).
19 Did Stalin ever translate it? (5,5).
20 Illness which gives Andrew less cheek (4).
22 The bird is an amateur on the piano (6).
23 Cinerama producer? (8).
26 Where they have a tune in the middle of dinner (5).
27 I am embraced by a crazy fool after a drink in the minister's office (9).
28 But not the place for anticyclones (9).
29 Weapon which gives society something to say (5).

DOWN

1 In the disposal of capital Inland Revenue is predatory (9).
2 Advantage of work without a translator (5).
3 Most depressed and oft missing from a resort (6).
4 Wrong chart with right name for Welsh town (10).
5 A hundred and something burnt! That is money! (4).
6 Vessels in which one has soup with meal (8).
7 The children are well after being away (9).
8 Assume one is in a job (5).
13 Journalists notice what appear on covers (10).
15 Comprehending a plump kind of pigeon (9).
17 Manager who is without experience on the board (9).
18 Inn later redesigned, but not on the outside (8).
21 One of these farms is frequently after credit (6).
22 The magazine for striking power (5).
24 Instrument which gives nothing to a small group (5).
25 Go round for trip in the car (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 13

U	R	A	N	■	A	■	N	S	T	E	P	■	■	■
S	P	R	■	G	S	M	■	L	R	X	H	■	■	■
E	R	■	H	A	P	P	Y	■	O	T	A	■	■	■
S	O	L	■	D	R	O	■	S	T	E	R	■	■	■
C	H	■	L	E	A	N	N	■	T	R	E	■	■	■
S	■	N	E	W	Y	E	A	R	■	N	G	■	■	■
O	B	■	T	E	R	U	N	■	T	A	L	■	■	■
R	■	A	L	S	E	S	T	O	■	L	E	■	■	■
■	T	E	R	A	N	T	P	A	V	■	D	■	■	■
P	■	L	■	■	A	■	■	S	■	S	U	■	■	■
E	O	■	T	O	Y	O	U	■	N	T	A	■	■	■
S	N	A	■	L	S	N	■	S	S	E	N	■	■	■

Prizewinners to Salamanca 13

C. J. Ross (Glasgow)
Alec Bristow (Eye)
Mrs Proffer (London NW3)
S. C. Jones (Dinas)
David Newell (Bangkok)

Solution to No 1287

P	R	E	S	E	N	T	■	M	E	N	U	■	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G
I	■	P	■	T	■	H	E	■	O	M	A	R	■	S	■	R	■	■	■	■
N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R	■	T	R	O	U	B	L	E	S	O	M	E
A	■	D	■	O	■	U	■	I	■	T	■	E	■	L	■	N	■	■	■	■
F	A	I	R	S	■	G	O	D	M	O	T	H	E	R	■	D	I	A	N	A
O	■	A	■	H	■	E	■	N	■	E	■	N	■	T	■	D	■	■	■	■
R	E	S	P	E	C	T	I	N	G	■	C	R	E	A	M	S	L	I	C	E
E	■	C	■	N	■	F	■	■	D	■	A	■	C	■	A	■	O	■	■	■
■	N	O	R	T	H	U	M	B	R	I	A	N	■	L	I	C	E	N	S	E
H	■	P	■	O	■	L	■	I	S	■	D	■	E	■	R	■	■	■	A	■
E	R	E	B	U	S	■	C	L	O	S	E	S	T	■	F	I	L	L	E	R
M	■	■	R	■	W	■	L	E	■	O	■	G	■	S	■	O	■	L	■	■
P	A	C	K	A	G	E	■	I	N	C	I	N	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	■
■	■	H	■	G	■	S	■	N	■	T	■	■	E	■	A	■	S	■	A	■
P	E	R	C	E	N	T	A	G	E	■	R	E	M	A	I	N	D	E	R	S
E	■	I	■	■	R	■	S	■	P	■	U	■	T	■	■	S	■	P	■	■
L	O	S	E	R	■	I	N	G	R	A	I	N	E	D	■	F	E	T	C	H
I	■	T	■	O	■	A	■	R	■	U	■	A	■	A	■	R	■	A	■	■
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	S	T	I	C	■	C	O	N	V	I	V	I	A	L
A	■	A	■	T	■	N	■	E	■	H	E	R	■	F	■	T	■	■	■	■
N	E	S	T	E	G	G	S	■	A	L	P	S	■	S	H	Y	N	E	S	S

Prizewinners to No 1287

Elino Kamath (Palo Alto)
J. A. Seymour (Rothie Norman)
M. Hamilton (London SE22)
D. Reed (Bath)
Marianne Rowe (Manly, Australia)

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Niled crocodiles are mild compared! and lined
our brows! No ports of calm! Your sport
our agony! *Sadiste*! To cry "Tis Sade!'
will not avail – or lucre – you'll be cruel!

Belial's deep manor, Satan's promenade –
New Year! Real new! What terrifying renewal!
O year we dread, dark tester, puzzle setter,
mercy for what is bran (alas!) our brains!
To be Rett Butler, even, might be better –
romantic nard is perfumed, we are drains,
not lover or evolver. Earth, revolve
and bring the Comps that we low voles may solve!

GAVIN EWART

Who knows what rout, what economic tour
Along our bankrupt ways we'll take, whose sway –
Iron Thatcher or Jim's cheerful ruse? I'm sure
Whoever yaps, they will not think to spay
Dame Quango, cut the haws of tax, or wash
Away the items loved by legal mites
With which our lives are shot, or cut the tosh
Emitted by the squared-eyed thing each night,
Or rid us of the pins that prick, the snip
Of Pecksniff, gash of Damien's bed, the shag
Of every prig that has us in his grip.
I hope to grab some happiness, to brag
I've grasped each moment on the spot, to stop
Forecasts – and prod Life's Aphid for each drop!

T. GRIFFITHS

New Year begins! On vast pink gins I sing –
To sob with hope, not fear: 'tis thee I boost,
Dear England! from this night I do my Thing:
I cast off stupor, aspirins, and Proust!
To bed! eat, drink, and hear TV debate
On Man at Peril! – Hateful Parliament,
Thy tale is told: for, sleep thou ne'er so late,
Still thou reopen'st old, effete, o'erspent,
While I sit nude: O unions, disunite!
Stop, Rates! and render up rebates, ye Post!
Come back, great *Times*, and in thy
coming, smite
With thunderous shot the hindparts of
Hell's host! –
New Year – brave hearts – I sing – ah
me! . . . Ahem:
How queer . . . I'm humming Mozart's Requiem . . .

GINA BERKELEY

May winds lash, press in mud the face
of Sharpless;
Let's hope the key'll turn one last time on Kelly,
A bird will savage 'Orpheus' Baird,
who, harpless,
Shall see – by 'ell – by its blue-yellow belly,
'Tis Parrot (once it's trained) from
Bomber Section
Has pecked him in the ink-shop. Me and Hopkins
(Cool client Tim come back) will start collection
Of scalps, as Boteman sinks, the very top skins –
You'll get no reams from Bellenger and Ransome,
No entries from dat ole crone Corleone.
We'll drop cold mash on Marks, crash Hamill's
hansom
(With 'Tonys', J. and B.) off cliffs thought stony.
What? 'Liar, apt to boast!?' No, we're not partial:
We shall (Mar. 1's the date) *kill* Arthur Marshall.

BILL GREENWELL

Tony Miles

Chess

No 115 **October problems**

The October problems were a tricky set, particularly 103 and 104.

Problem 103 (8/p7/8/1Prk1pp1/1R6/7P/P4KP1/8) came from Miles/Sosonko Tilburg '78. White has an extra pawn, but, with his rook and king tied to the defence of the weak pawns, a win seems unlikely. 1.R-QR4, RxP; 2.RxP, K-K3 is a theoretical draw as is 1.P-N6, PxP; 2.RxP, R-B7ch; 3.K-N3, RxP; 4.R-N6, R-R6ch; 5.K-R2, K-K4; whilst 1.P-QR4, R-B7ch; 2.K-N3, R-B6ch;3.K-R2, R-R6 (threatening K-B4) is no help: so, I asked, does White have any real winning chances?

After half an hour's thought I found the only move to trouble Black, the surprising decentralising 1.K-N1! The idea is simply to tuck the WK away on R2 before improving the Q-side. Clearly Black cannot just pass 1 . . .K-K4; 2.K-R2, K-Q4; 3.P-QR4! and the BR cannot reach the QR file in time eg: 3 . . .R-B8; 4.P-R5, K-B4; 5.P-N6! KxR; 6.P-N7 wins.

Any K-side counterplay must be based on . . .P-B5. In the game Black tried the immediate 1 . . .P-B5? and lost to 2.P-KR4! R-B8ch; 3.K-R2, K-B4; 4.R-K4, PxP; 5.RxP, KxP; 6.P-R4ch, K-B3 (or . . .K-R4; 7.RxP, R-R8; 8.R-KB4, RxP; 9.RxRch, KxR; 10.P-N4, wins) 7.RxP etc.

Two modified forms of counterplay also fail:—
(a) 1.K-N1, R-B8ch; 2.K-R2, R-B7; (intending P-B5-B6) 3.R-QR4, P-B5; 4.RxP, P-B6; 5.K-N3! PxP; 6.K-R2 winning.
(b) 1.K-N1, K-K4; (preparing P-B5 whilst avoiding P-KR4) 2.K-R2, P-B5; 3.P-QR4! R-B7; 4.P-R5, P-B6; 5.P-N6, RxPch; 6.K-R1 and White queens with check.

The best defence is 1.K-N1, R-B7! 2.R-QR4, R-B4! (but not . . .K-B4; 3.RxP, KxP; 4.P-R4ch and R-KN7) and if 3.R-R5, P-R3! 4.P-R4, R-B8ch and . . .PxP should draw. So 3.RxP, RxP; 4.R-KN7, R-N7! 5.RxP, K-K5! 6.P-R3, R-N6! 7.P-KR4 (or P-QR4, R-R6) RxP; 8.P-R5, R-R2; and Black holds.

Careful passive defence may also survive. Mr J D Taylor suggests 1.K-N1, K-K4; 2.K-R2, R-B7; 3.R-QR4, R-B4; 4.R-R5, K-B5! 5.P-QR4, R-B2; 6.R-R6, R-Q2! (otherwise R-QB6 with tempo) and although White has greatly improved his position, it seems that he cannot win. eg 7.R-QB6, R-Q5! 8.P-R5, R-QN5 etc.

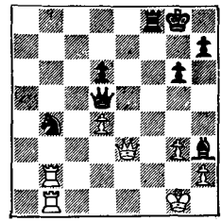
Problem 104 (r4rk1 / p1p2pp1 / bp1p1q1p / n2PpNB1 / 2P1P2P / 2Pn4 / P3QPP1 / R4K1R) was a more complicated affair. There were numerous possibilities stemming from 1 . . .BxP; . . .N-B5, . . .NxBP or even . . .Q-N3. Marks were awarded for interesting ideas and accurate analysis. Lack of space prevents me from giving more than a few sample lines.

a) 1 . . .BxP; 2.Q-N4, Q-N3; 3.N-K7ch, K-R1; 4.NxQch, PxN; 5.P-B3, N-B5ch; 6.K-B2, PxB; 7.PxPch, K-N1; and Black stands well.

b) 1 . . .BxP; 2.BxQ, N-B5; 3.QxB, NxQ; 4.BxNP, KR-K1; 5.BxRP, N-Q7ch; is unclear.

c) 1 . . .N-B5; 2.Q-N4, NxBP; 3.K-K1, N-Q6ch; 4.K-K2, N-B5ch; 5.K-Q1, PxB; 6.PxP, N-K6ch; 7.PxN, B-K7ch; 8.QxB, QxN! and now not 9.PxN, QxBP; 10.Q-R5, P-KB4! and Black survives, but 9.PxQ. NxQ; 10.KxN, P-KB3 (forced) 11.P-N6 with a winning bird.

First prize in the October competition goes to Mr J D Taylor (£15) followed by Messrs: Deshmukh, Sahasrabudhe, and Garfath (£10 each) and Anantha Swamy (£5).



Problem No 115

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 24 January.

Solution to Problem 113

1.P-B6ch, KxP; 2.K-B5, (Zugzwang!) K-N1; 3.K-N6, P-Q4 (else KxP draws) 4.K-B5, P-R4 (otherwise K-K5) 5.K-K6! P-Q5; (or K-B1, KxP draws) 6.K-K7, P-Q6; 7.P-B6, P-Q7; 8.P-B7ch, K-R2 drawing.

APPOINTMENTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

requires

DOCUMENTATION ASSISTANT

for their London based Secretariat, to work closely with the Middle East Research Department; to be responsible for monitoring press material, indexing, categorising, material and assisting in the retrieval of information.

Fluent Arabic and English are essential; working knowledge of other languages useful. Applicants should have a strong interest in documentation work, previous experience in this field would be an advantage. Ability to work both as part of a team and on own initiative, together with good typing are essential.

Salary £4,167 p.a. Closing date 28 February.

For further details and application form contact Personnel Office, Amnesty International, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF or telephone 01-836 7788, Ext. 289.

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Further particulars and application procedure obtainable from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF. Applications close on 28 February 1979.

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

requires RESEARCHER

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Candidates should have a specialist knowledge of, and an interest in the area, its history and politics, and objective political judgement, together with a background in related academic studies.

Fluent English, and a knowledge of Eastern European languages essential.

Salary £4,680 per annum, Closing date 14 February 1979.

For further details and application form, please contact Personnel Office, Amnesty International, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, or phone 01-836 7788, Ext. 289.

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Applications (12 copies, quoting ref. AG/58/NS) should be sent to the Registrar, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ from whom further particulars are obtainable, not later than 19 February, 1979.

RUSKIN COLLEGE is proceeding to appoint a Vice-Principal, as from September/October 1979, to act as Deputy to Principal and take responsibility for some areas of College work and development, plus teaching in social studies, according to qualifications. *Good degree, experience of adult/workers' education or other relevant higher education desirable.* Current salary scale £8,760-£9,263: USS. Details from General Secretary, Ruskin College, Oxford. Closing date 31 January 1979.

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Further details may be obtained from:

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The closing date for the receipt of applications is 12 February 1979.

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LECTURESHIP IN ITALIAN

Applications are invited for the above post.

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Further particulars from The Secretary, The University, Aberdeen, with whom applications (2 copies) should be lodged by 2 February 1979.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

requires RESEARCHER

for the Middle East Department. To investigate human rights situations and individual cases in the Middle East. Work involves preparing prisoner biographies, background reports, briefing missions and formulating policy. Candidates should have a specialist knowledge of and an interest in the area, its history and politics, and objective political judgement are essential, together with a background in related academic studies. Fluent English, and a knowledge of Arabic essential. Salary £4,680 per annum. Closing date 28 February 1979. Position will be based in London. Application from Personnel Office, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF or telephone 01-836 7788, Ext. 289.

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Theatres

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ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Mon.-Fri. 8 p.m. Sats 5 & 8.30 'Mary Barnes' by David Edgar.

TOWER. Canonbury Place, N1. 'Equus', by Peter Shaffer, 12-14, 16-20 Jan. at 7.30. Bookings: 226 5111 (Mons 6.30-8, Tues-Sats 2.15-8).

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). The Freud Memorial Lectures in Psychoanalysis by Dr J. Sandler, Mondays at 5.30. 22 Jan. — 'The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic View'. 29 Jan. — 'The Psychoanalytic Psychology of Adaptation'. 5 Feb. — 'Pain and Depression: A Psychoanalytic Perspective'. Admission Free, Without Ticket.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 18 Jan. 'Happy in the Morning'. Film directed by Alberto Cavalcanti, 1938. 'Enough to Eat'. Film directed by Edgar Anstey, 1936. Admission free. Details of Public Lectures from Publications Office *(send stamped envelope).*

HERMANN BONDI talks on 'Science & Education', London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terr., W8. Wed. 17 Jan., 6.30 p.m. 30p.

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